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Blue Jay

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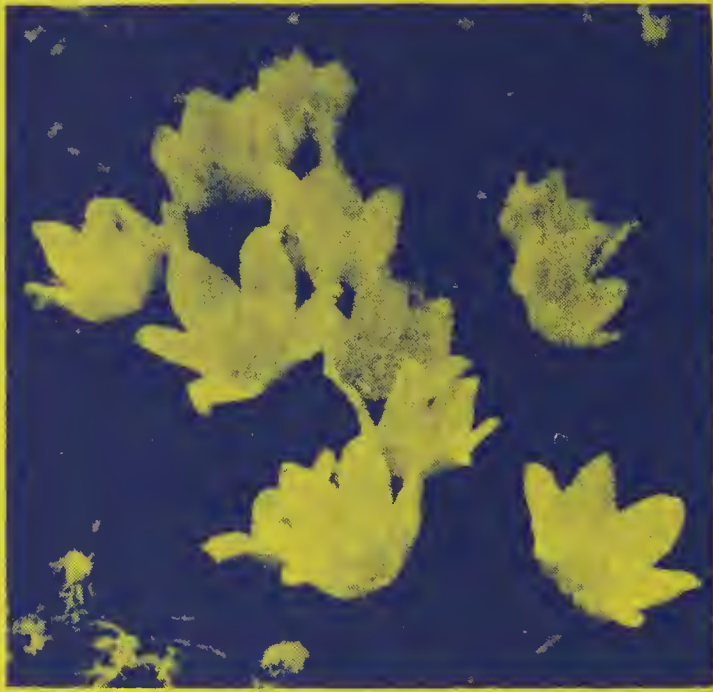


Photo by Cliff Shaw

Blue Jay Chatter

LLOYD T. CARMICHAEL, Editor.

TO the prairie folk, the crocuses pictured on this page and the meadowlark shown on the opposite one are, perhaps more than any other plant or bird, the long awaited heralds which usher in the stimulating days of spring-time. To the man with a love for open spaces under the blue sky, they quicken the life pulse, and awaken the desire to renew ac-

quaintances once more with the creatures of the fields, air and forests, and to cultivate an even greater intimacy with those companions which Nature has so abundantly provided. My wish to all BLUE JAY readers is that, in this profitable pursuit, they may find joy, peace and contentment.

* * *

In the preparation of this issue I found it necessary to leave out a few very interesting contributions which will now be held over for the next number. To relieve this situation I would suggest that, except in special cases, contributors limit their remarks to a maximum of one page or 700 words. A deduction from this should be made for any space desired for illustration.

* * *

One more Unit, the Yorkton School Unit, has subscribed to the BLUE JAY for all their schools — over 70 of them. We are pleased to welcome these new members, and trust both the teachers and pupils will derive much from reading the experiences of others, and by making their own nature contributions.

* * *

After much consideration it has been felt advisable to change the dates of the deadlines for the reception of material, back by one month. One reason is so the students may get their copies before school closes in June, and another is so that the fall issue can be in the mails well before Christmas. THIS MEANS THAT ALL MATERIAL FOR OUR SPRING ISSUE MUST BE IN BY MAY 1. Please send it as early as possible.

* * *

The suggestion made by Mr. August J. Breitung about changing the name of BLUE JAY to "The Prairie Naturalist" has received a very cool reception. I have a great many letters dealing with the matter and am happy that their unanimous desire is to retain the name we have. Over a long period of years we have built up this magazine until the name "Blue Jay" means something distinctive and something intimate. It has a feeling of warmth and not of frigidity. Mr. A. C. Budd has expressed the feelings of the others so well that I am pleased to quote, in part from his letter.

"A far greater danger in my personal opinion, is that the magazine may become too circumscribed and too 'highbrow,' thus losing its charm of simplicity and its appeal to the nature lover — the naturalist who loves wild life for its own sake and not as a deep, scientific study.

Let us keep our magazine fairly simple, broad in outlook and coverage, so that it will be of interest to the younger folk and to all who love nature as it should be loved, as the manifestation of God's wonderful creative powers. Certainly retain the name 'Blue Jay'."

What does the Meadowlark say?

By ROSE McLAUGHLIN, Indian Head

What does the meadowlark say? When we were youngsters our favorite interpretations were, "My home is in Peterborough," and "I see your yellow petticoat." Sometimes he sang a shorter song, and then we thought he was saying, "I was here a year ago." One year we had a teacher called Miss Micklebust, and then all the meadowlarks began to sing, "Here comes Miss Micklebust."

In W. O. Mitchell's Saskatchewan novel, "Who Has Seen The Wind," the meadowlarks say, "One, two, three, and here I go," while in Mrs. Clarissa Stewart's poem in the last Blue Jay they say, "There's nothing here to kick about."

It set me to wondering just how many interpretations there are for the meadowlark's song, so at our annual meeting in October I asked a lot of people, and sure enough, everyone gave me a different answer.

"Which call do you mean?" asked Ralph Stueck. He whistled a long call, and a short, jerky one, and gave as his interpretation, "The bulls are in the wheat again," and "Three pretty preachers, three."

Then he turned to W. A. Brownlee of Rose Valley. "What does the meadowlark say when he starts to sing first thing in the morning?"

"First comes your little petticoat," replied Brownlee, logically enough.

"I was at Buckingham Palace," said a voice on the edge of the group, but it turned out that the speaker, a Miss Reid of Regina, was telling a friend about her trip to the British Isles, and not giving her version of the meadowlark's song at all!

Mrs. Wolters of Tolland, Alberta — and she came all the way for no other reason than to attend the meeting—submitted, "We are very happy people."

Mrs. Hilda Newton of Indian Head said that in the homesteading days their uncle used to tell them that the meadowlark was supervising seeding operations, and telling them to "Put in 40 acres, Bob."



Some other are as follows:

Doug Gilroy: "Spring is here, you know," and "This place isn't suitable." Presumably the latter is the lady lark crabbing about the housing situation.

Bob Arnold of Prince Albert: "Somebody's pinching me."

Fred Bard: "Don't say you did if you didn't, you know."

Stuart Houston: "Oh dear, my feet are cold."

Myself, I think the meadowlark says, "You are my little sweetie-heart." Singing to his lady love, what else would he be saying?

AN APPRECIATION

To read of a one-day count of 86 species of birds by the Speirs, the "Trumpeter Swan" and the "Memorable Experience" in seeing Whooping Cranes — all this and the heavenly pictures too, of the latter! What more could one ask? I must express my appreciation for this magazine.

I hope the boy who first observed the Cranes, and told his father will be suitably rewarded.

Mrs. Olive Simmons,
White Rock, B.C.

"A Winterized Midget"

By RAY PETERSON
R.R. 2, Tofield, Alberta

It wasn't a likely day to see any bird visitors. The red column in the thermometer had sagged to the thirty below zero mark and stayed there, as though too stiff to ever rise again.

In the lee of a small building, a small huddle of English Sparrows regarded me indifferently. Apparently they were too miserable to bother being cautious. As I stepped into the open-doored shed, a small bird flew from the floor. Promptly, I shut the door to prevent it from escaping.

Clinging to the wall plate in a dim corner was a robin-sized owl. It was a friendly looking little fellow with glass-buttoned eyes that seemed to large for its face. On the floor, from where it had been roused, lay the half-eaten body of an English Sparrow. The plump, little owl wasn't as homeless as its appearance suggested.

I captured the owl quite easily. The small warrior seemed to realize that he was at my mercy, for a time at least, and he submitted without trying to use his formidable claws or strongly-built beak. Defiantly, however, he clacked his bill to let me know that he wasn't afraid of me, not one tiny bit.

Later, Kathryn and I, with "Taverner" playing an oft repeated role, decided that the wee fellow was a Little Boreal Owl.

We would have liked to have kept the little owl. He was such a bold, handsome fellow. Fortunately, better nature prevailed. After learning his identity, we turned him free. He will be remembered, though, for he brought a wealth of interest and enjoyment on a day that had begun coldly barren.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIMENS INVITED

Anyone interested in exchanging insect specimens — especially butterflies and moths?

Will buy or trade material in these groups as preferred. Particularly interested in moths.

Winter's Perfume

Elizabeth Cruickshank

On a brittle cold day I raised the cover of my little terrarium in the south window. As if by magic I was no longer house-weary. The fragrance of the plants in the soft moist earth had carried me on a long-ago quest for my fern collection. Through dim woods and tall brake we had come to the shady cliff where the sensitive fern grew in abundance, while far below on the bank of the clear little brook the dainty fragile fern enjoyed life in such a happy environment.

No other sense, says Maeterlinck, possesses such an after-call as the sense of smell. "Sight preserves pictures, but it is photographic and exclusive. Hearing deals in echoes, but smell will recreate in a way almost miraculous the inner emotion of a particular time and place."

How often we have heard the phantom music of the clover fields of home carried on a fragrant breeze. My wee bit of confined earth had put my feet on springy ground. If we cannot have the field we may in memory enjoy its wealth for the healing and comfort that "fulfils our hourly need, the daily manna gives."

On a brilliant day in late November a drive to Long Lake was an experience to remember. Uplifted as in a glory by the panorama before us—the sky such rich vivid blue high above, paler graded blue to cool green below, I felt how thankful we should be for eyes to thrill to the "fine sincerity of light and the luxury of open sky"; and the lake, ice-sealed, a valley paved with stars; paths across its milky ways in a glistening world.

Single duck tracks showed a lone bird's travels to reach open water. Muskrats, warmly red, sunned themselves undisturbed by our nearness. Far below the surface of the melted ice, near the shore, busy water bugs swam. Chickadees flitted about in the overhanging willows. "Oh, for the gift to crystallize the rich simplicity of rhythm in the woods and sky, in songs as free as—chickadee."

Caught up in the spell of the perfume of winter distilling about us from sun-drenched sodden grass,

(Continued on Page 7)

SUMMER BIRDS LINGER

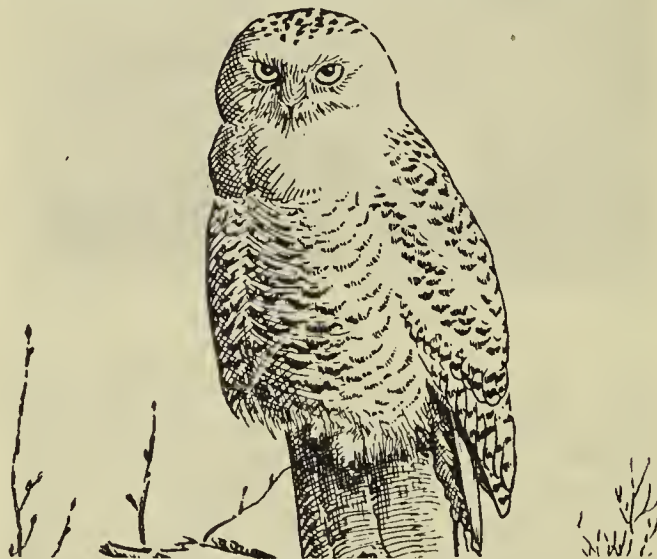
MRS. ELLEN AVERILL, R.R. 3, Minnedosa, Man.

(Editor's note: The keen nature observations of Mrs. Averill, who is 84 years of age, should be an inspiration to all of us. There seems no doubt that the world, to her, is made brighter, happier and more interesting because of her interest in the activities of birds, mammals and insects with which she comes in contact about her farm home. Throughout these pages appear several of her short articles, illustrating the variety and scope of her observations. The accompanying illustration from "South Dakota Bird Notes" was drawn by W. J. Breckenridge.)

Due to the unusually mild fall coupled with an unseasonable cold snap in late October, the birds like the humans, seemed a little doubtful what to do. Many times we have seen a few of what we generally consider winter visitors still around in the late fall; indeed, three ducks were seen flying around on January 3rd; Mountain Bluebirds, which are some of our earliest spring arrivals were also seen much later than usual.

The cold spell in October brought the Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers and the larger Hairy to our veranda where I put fat and bones for their benefit. Snowy Owls have also been seen, but they are not common. Ravens have also shown up. Magpies are getting very common and quite bold. About ten days ago, one of the bold rascals came to a feeding place in a tree, a few yards from the kitchen, where Chickadees and Downy Woodpeckers are daily visitors.

At present I am staying at my



Snowy Owl

daughter's home, in a wide valley shut in by high hills and many deep gullies which are thickly treed, and the Magpies find shelter there. Just now they can be seen flying back and forth almost any hour of the day. A beast has just been killed for the farm winter supply of meat and these long-tailed black and white birds find good picking around the slaughter ground.

WHAT A PICTURE TO PAINT!

ONA F. LICK, Davidson, Sask.

Across the road from our place is a slight depression in our neighbor's field, scarcely discernible except in springtime when filled with winter's run-off. In May, 1953, a severe blizzard and a later rain replenished it. Between the depression and the ditch, also filled with water, is a little ridge of dirt, left there by the grader, with its fringe of tall dead weeds and bare buck-brush.

To the casual passer-by, the depression is nothing; to the farmer it is a nuisance since it cannot be seeded with the rest of the field; but to an amateur photographer it presents many possibilities — with weeds and wading birds mirrored in the still water. Blue sky and fleecy clouds above an unbroken horizon make beautiful reflections, too.

To the bird lover, it teems with interest. Pairs of Mallards and Pintails make a lovely take-off when a car drives by. And what a picture for Peter Scott to paint are the same ducks coming in for a safe landing! A Red-winged Blackbird bathes in the muddy border. A Killdeer, calling shrilly, flits by — swoops down and skims the water's surface. Its mate runs by fits and starts, along the edge. Standing in the water are two bigger wading birds, jerking their heads, dipping long beaks into the water, making perfect reflections as they do so. As if to prove its identity, as I watch, one stretches a wing, displaying a white bar on black under-wing, and almost cries out: "We are Willets."

Oriole and Dove in December

Photos from kodachromes, by DR. STUART HOUSTON, Yorkton.



Mourning Dove

A female Baltimore Oriole had been feeding at the tray of Mrs. A. Kryski for three weeks before it entered Dr. Stuart Houston's trap half a block away on Dec. 17, and was banded. A robin was banded the same day. The average last fall date for Orioles in Yorkton is Sept. 3, and the latest previous date was for Sept. 6 (in 1939). The Oriole was last seen by Mrs. Kryski about three days later. We hope it reached Central America where it should have been — but we doubt it.

The Mourning Dove had been present at the farm of R. A. Maddaford, south-west of Saltcoats, from mid-November. At first it stayed in a sheltered depression on the south side of a haystack and fed at the pigpens, chiefly eating chop. On the night of Dec. 26th (the bird having been undisturbed until that day), included in the Saltcoats bird count, it was found sleeping in a burrow in the straw on top of the pigsty. It was bitterly cold and presumably



Female Baltimore Oriole

the heat rising from the pigs below may have helped keep it warm. Although pitch dark, Mrs. Stuart Houston was able to capture the bird in the butterfly net when Brian Bjarnason and Dr. Stuart Houston caused it to fly out. A color flash photo was taken, a band placed on the bird, then it was returned to its little shelter. A light was shone in its eye as it was released; then when the light was turned off, it remained where it was. The dove disappeared a few days later, and has not been seen since.

Not As Innocent As We Had Thought

MRS. ELLEN AVERILL

House Wrens had always been among our favorite birds, but alas, during the last two or three years we have had to confess that they are not as innocent and friendly as we had thought. Indeed they are almost as blood thirsty as the Purple Grackles, which have been seen to drag the young of Eve Swallows out of their nests on the barn, carry

them up to the roof, tear them in pieces and devour them. The Wrens have been known to pierce the eggs of the Bluebird and Tree Swallow, and drag young Tree Swallows out of a nest box and drop them to the ground. They wanted the box for their own use, and where out to get it by any means — fair or foul.

GOLDENEYE DUCK

D. WILBY, Heatherdown, Alta.

In 1947 a Pileated Woodpecker decided she would make a nest about five feet up in a dead poplar tree which stood about twenty feet from an unused house of ours. After making a hole about four inches in diameter and eighteen inches deep, she changed her mind — probably too many people passing by..

Next year I was quite surprised to find that a Goldeneye Duck had adopted it as a home and laid nine eggs. Again in 1949 she laid ten eggs. When these eggs hatched I spent much of the day watching the nest hole from about fifty feet away. Some friends were with me for over an hour. All the time she sat on the edge of the hole and watched us. After tea we looked again but during that hour she somehow managed to get all the ducklings out.

In 1950 we put a ten-foot addition on the house and moved in. As the north end of the house was now only about ten feet from the tree, I expected she would leave, but no, she came there again. I thought we should become better friends, so whenever I went near the tree, I always said "Hello Ducky" several times. Then I looked into the nest. She shuffled around a bit but stayed on it — so I put my hand in and she allowed me to stroke her head and back, then she gently pecked my hands. So this went on until 1953 — now five years she had nested there, but she always managed to get her babies out unseen. She had hatched all the eggs except one year, one egg did not hatch.

So this year, 1953, I kept a close watch. The ducklings all seemed to hatch during the night and in the morning when I went to see her the nest was full of little ducks. She allowed me to pick them up and have a good look at them. She kept them in all day to dry off and gain strength to make the five feet down to the ground. So I watched until she perched on the edge of the nest. "Now", I thought "I will see how she gets them out". I went into the house as there was a window facing

the nest hole — with a curtain on it. I hid behind the curtain with just my head out, so I could see plainly. It wasn't long till she flew down to the ground and started off through the vegetation, and I lost sight of her. After a while she came back and went into the nest. She did this two or three times until she had made a path through the weeds, etc. Now she took a position about four or five feet from the tree, facing the hole, and talked to them in duck language, explaining that all was ready for them to come out — and out they came. They scrambled up the side of the hole, perched on the edge a moment, then jumped towards their mother and cuddled down beside her, one by one. Then she went through the path she had made — all ten little ducklings waddling after her. She went so quickly that I couldn't see how they could keep up to her. Away they went, across the garden to a pile of straw that I had used for winter mulch. Somehow or other they all managed to scramble over it and into the bush. It was about half a mile by the route she took in order to reach the creek. If she had gone straight out from the tree she could have halved the distance, all of which proves to me that ducks' ways are not our ways, believing as we do that a straight line is the shortest distance to a given point.

So that is the end of my story. I never saw them again. I expect they worked their way the six or eight miles down the creek to a lake. Next year, if here, I will try to follow them to see if they all arrive safely.

How apt are we to dismiss the winter landscape as a drab monotone of black and white, yet by the discerning eye, how much color can be found. A low spot with a large patch of slender red willows, rich, dark crimson below, shading to bright flame-color at the tips of the twigs, is a delight to the eye, while a single tree-like stem of the wild rose, heavily laden with scarlet hips, makes a sharp accent against the snow.

Birds of Prey – Feeding Habits

RONALD HOOPER, Somme, Sask.

GOSHAWK — feeds on poultry and young birds. One January day several years ago I was on the way for a load of straw, when suddenly a Goshawk came near, flying laboriously with a Sharp-tailed Grouse in its talons. I yelled at him and he dropped the grouse which I quickly retrieved. Being robbed of his delicious meal, the angry hawk picked a fight with a Snowy Owl. The two birds sat in the snow about ten feet apart, glaring at each other like a pair of fighting roosters. Suddenly they leaped forward and met in mid-air, talons foremost. They then sank back to the ground to repeat the performance. They kept it up for about fifteen or twenty minutes, then they gave up and separated.

THE SHARP SHINNED HAWK -- feeds on small birds, largely sparrows. One day last spring I wanted a Crested Flycatcher for our collection of mounted birds. I shot at one and wounded it. The poor wounded bird hovered in mid-air, when suddenly a Sharp-shinned Hawk whipped out of a grove of spruce, seized the Flycatcher and made a hasty retreat with it.

THE RED-TAILED HAWK — feeds on squirrels, mice and other small mammals. One day, last summer, a Red-tailed Hawk decided to tackle a mother hen and her chicks in our yard. Being inexperienced at catching birds he did not swoop on them like an accipiter. Instead, he landed on the ground beside them. The mother hen put her chickens behind her and jumped up at the hawk. The bewildered hawk just sat there while the hen grew more excited by the moment. My mother rushed from the house and screamed at the hawk. This forced him to act fast, so he rushed forward, siezed a little chicken and flew away with it. The hawk cannot be blamed for this rare incident, as mammals were very scarce in our district last summer.

THE BROAD-WINGED HAWK -- feeds on small mammals. Since they



Marsh Hawk

live in heavy forest they sit in trees and wait for their prey to move about. This is unusual for a buteo, as the others usually watch for their prey from the air.

THE SWAINSON'S HAWK — feeds on small mammals. Sometimes they follow farm implements and catch mice as they scatter for safety.

THE AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK — feeds on mice. These birds do a lot of perching in the morning, and most of their feeding in the afternoon and evening. They also hunt at night.

THE MARSH HAWK — feeds mostly on mammals, but also catches some birds. My brother has seen it persistently hunting snipes. The accompanying photograph shows one on the look-out. When photographed she was flying above her nest.

THE GYRFALCON — feeds on birds. We once saw one of the white color phase, feeding on blood in the snow where a deer had been killed.

THE DUCK HAWK — feeds mostly on waterfowl. They probably do a great deal of good in hunting season by ending the sufferings of wounded ducks.

THE PIGEON HAWK — feeds on birds. One day last November while in mixed forest, we heard a whir of

wings, and looking up, saw a Ruffed Grouse fleeing in panic before a Pigeon Hawk — about twenty yds. behind him. The grouse landed on the ground and the falcon landed in a tree above him and waited in ambush. A shot, fired at him, soon changed his mind.

THE SPARROW HAWK — feeds on mice and insects. These birds will often so gorge themselves on mice that they will sit droopily in trees for hours while digestion does its work. Only rarely do they catch sparrows.

The diet of the **GREAT HORN-ED OWL** is said to be one-third birds, the rest mammals. However, I believe this is not true, but that about one-third of these birds have acquired a taste for birds, while the others seldom touch them. One nest, we found, contained the nest of several rats, another contained the remains of varying Hares. In neither case was an incriminating feather found.

Once Great Horned Owls have acquired the taste for birds — guard your poultry. They will even kill geese and turkeys. Once we came upon a Great Horned Owl eating a Short-eared Owl. Such a cannibal! However, let's make sure of a Great Horned Owl's diet before we shoot him. It may cost you a hen, but what is that compared with innumerable rats and mice?

The **SNOWY OWL** — feeds on mice and hares, and also takes some game birds.

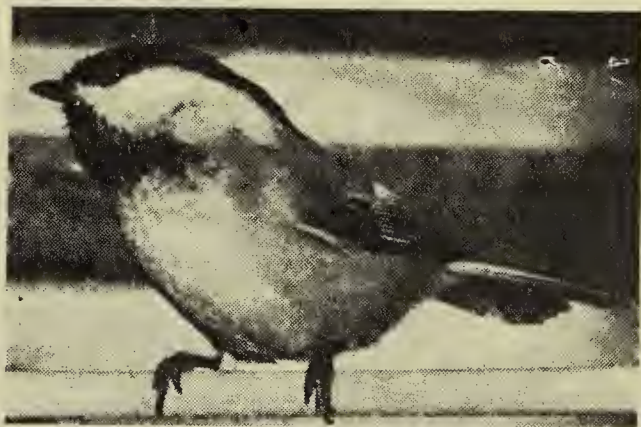
The **SHORT-EARED OWL** feeds almost entirely on mice. One day I saw a cat carrying a mouse, with an immature Short-eared Owl hovering low over his back and looking hungrily down at him with big, greedy eyes. He followed the cat up the lane and right to the house.

THE LONG-EARED OWL feeds mostly on mammals. Immature ones sometimes kill poultry.

Our hawks and owls are mostly beneficial, so let us do our best to protect them. Their destruction results in an upset in the balance of nature, so that there is an overabundance of mammalian pests, resulting in much destruction to our crops.

The Chickadee

John E. Nixon, Wauchope, Sask.



When all the world is robed in white
Then often comes a friendly sprite
Among the leafless trees.

A black-capped, cheery little soul,
Flitting about each bough and bole
Completely at his ease.

Careless of wind or frost or snow,
I see him gaily come and go

A spirit of the groves.

The storms of winter try him not;
Contented with his humble lot

In merry mood he roves.

He seems to seek the ways I tread,
And by my side, or overhead,

He gladly calls to me
With that clear note that loud and
sweet

The silent winter woods repeat
Of chick-a-dee-dee-dee.

From bough to bough he quickly
wings

Or to a nodding grass stem clings,
Audacity itself.

Less dreary are these winter days
For his confiding, friendly way,
The fearless, feathered elf!

WINTER'S PERFUME — 13-14MB (Continued from Page 2)

dead dank leaves, wet logs, we felt, strangely, a sea-weed-laden breeze from Fundy Bay and were once again breathing deep the salty air. Emotions provoked by smell, how real and lasting.

A bush rabbit hurrying past a rose bush on the bank — the fat crimson haws gleaming, making a patch of splendor in the snow, brought us back to the present. But the glorious scene and the fragrance of this day would be recalled again and again.

"Remembered joys are never past,
They were, they are, they yet shall
be."

THE GREAT GRAY OWL

E. T. JONES, 10106 - 138 St., Edmonton, Alta.

Certainly one of the rarest birds now found in Canada is the seldom seen Great Gray Owl. For two successive years my associate, Mr. Al Oeming, who incidently is one of the few active falconers in Canada, and myself have searched in vain for the nest of this beautiful large Owl. Our travels of over ten thousand miles have taken us through hundreds of miles of virgin timber on horse-back and often by foot. To date not one of these birds has been seen alive! On several occasions we have arrived a few days or a few weeks too late, only to find the carcass of one of these birds outside the trapper's cabin. Numerous reports and leads by farmers, trappers and lumbermen, invariably end in us viewing the nest of the Horned Owl, which admittedly, can easily be mistaken for our quarry by the unfamiliar.

To aid in our search a very complete booklet has recently been prepared and circulated throughout northern Alberta. Almost 5,000 have been distributed to trappers, rangers, and any others that might be able to supply information. The return to date has been interesting, and it is my hope that anyone reading this article who has in the past or in recent years encountered the Great Gray Owl, in any part of Canada, will write me at the above address. It will be my pleasure to forward a booklet to anyone wishing same. Any information as to the type of country where the species has been encountered, nests seen, the birds observed, will all be helpful in our project.

The purpose of this search, speaking for myself, is to record on color film, as much of the home life of this Owl as is possible to get. For my associate, it means the writing of a life history of a bird which appears to be close on the footsteps of the beautiful Whooping Crane. There is no doubt that the predations of man will eventually force this species into extinction. We look with anticipation to the readers of the Blue Jay, as a possible source of information that may eventually



Have You Seen This Bird?

lead to the finding of the nest of "Scotiaptex Nebulosa," the Great Gray Owl.

The Speed of Flight

A. J. HUDSON, Mortlach, Sask.

Observing a Short-eared Owl leisurely floating along, one hardly realizes the speed at which it travels in its effortless flight.

Last Sunday (Dec. 27) on my way out on a country road south of Mortlach, I flushed one such bird. He headed straight down the road above the grass to the left of me, occasionally beating his wings and at other times just gliding. I was travelling at 35, yet it was drawing away from me. At 40, I began to creep up a little. The bird angled across the road, but stayed ahead of the car, and on the right-hand side of the road, even at a slight angle to my line of travel, still stayed ahead. Only when he veered off at a larger angle, did I pass him.

A Black, Great Horned Owl

S. A. MANN, Skull Creek, Sask.

About the middle of October while travelling north of Gull Lake with some friends we saw an almost black Great Horned Owl. It had been injured and could not fly so we were able to get quite close to it. The only part of it which wasn't black was a little piece from wings to tip of tail. This was mottled with dark gray.

I wanted to take it as a specimen for the museum but our friend would not hear of its being taken, even for that purpose. As it was about fifty miles from home, I didn't care to go back next day on a chance of finding it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Taverner has this to say. "The Great Horned Owl is a very variable

species and divides into a number of geographical races. Many attempts have been made to find them, but when tested by specimens of breeding birds, none of them is entirely satisfactory. The following races are recognized in Canada in the American Ornithologists' Union Check list. The typical Eastern Great Horned Owl contains much warm ochre and neither black nor white is particularly prominent. The Arctic Horned Owl is almost pure white. The Western Horned Owl is a light-coloured bird, characterized by much light ochre underplumage. It is expected in the southern parts of the Prairie Provinces. Throughout the mountains of British Columbia we have a dark form, the Pacific Horned Owl, much blacker than the Eastern Horned Owl. In northern British Columbia and adjoining parts of the Yukon is a similar black form, the Northwestern Horned Owl. It is interesting to note that these dark western forms are almost identical in coloration with the Labrador Horned Owl, though separated from it by thousands of miles, and with an almost white race between. The species is suspected of being dimorphic to some extent, and the black coloured birds are supposed to occur in all races."

Disputed Territory

Mrs. George H. Johnson, Hassan, Sask.

There is a place between our house and granary that all the birds seem to like in the spring during the migration period. We have counted as many as ten different species feeding here at one time. Sometimes there will be over a hundred birds feeding here. We enjoy watching them from the window.

Last spring, after many had come and gone, a pair of Robins and a pair of Killdeer Plovers decided that this was their own private feeding ground and proceeded to chase all other comers away. Then they started to battle it out between themselves for sole possession. Finally they gave up the hopeless struggle, the Robin staying at the north side and the Killdeer staying at the south. There they remained until late in summer. No intruders were allowed there — my, how they did chase them! After their young were hatched they disappeared.

In our yard we also have had a pair of Bluebirds that have returned for the past three years. Each time they nested in an old binder twine box. They are so pretty to watch!

An Emissary

Arthur Ward, Swift Current

It was 3 p.m. — the day of October 2nd, last year. Walking within the fringe of trees, I noticed a bird flying towards me from the dugout. It lit within a dozen yards. Not discerning it clearly at first suggested to me a Flicker, but no! — of all the surprises, it was "The Blue Jay".

This was the first instance one had ever been seen here. Did it say "Hello"? Anyway we regarded each other in a friendly manner, and it flew to a branch over my head. I could not help but regard it as an emissary. In expression it seemed to say: "I just called to see how you were getting along, I've other places to go and must be on my way." It then flew just north of the bird traps and discoursed some "Blue Jay Chatter". Hoping it might want to investigate the traps and allow me to present it with a ring, I hastened to the harbour and brought out my bird calls. The orchestral notes, however, were of no avail. I searched the grove only to find that it had simply vanished, leaving me reminiscent regarding some Person, we once knew and have not forgotten.

Concerned over Survival of the Sharp-tailed Grouse

Frank Baines, Saltcoats

I am still quite anxious for the survival of our provincial bird emblem of Saskatchewan — the Sharp-tailed Grouse. There can be no question about the great reduction in its numbers throughout this locality. I went to the last annual meeting of the Natural History Society, at Regina, from Yorkton by car with five other keen observers and no one saw a Sharp-tailed either going or coming, although conditions were ideal both ways. Two Ruffed Grouse and one cock Pheasant were seen.

On a 200 mile journey by car from Saltcoats to Kipling, Grenfell Wolseley, Ellisboro, Lemberg, Melville and Saltcoats, only one Sharp-tail was seen. This journey too was made in the fall, and again under ideal conditions.

There used to be dancing grounds on the farms of Bert Maddaford, Sec. 13, B. R. Middleton, Sec. 11, W. A. Baines, Sec. 2, R. A. Maddaford, Sec. 8, D. C. F. Baines, Sec. 20, W. A. Salisbury, Sec. 17, all of Twp 23, R. 3-w2nd. — but none of these are used now.

The habit of these birds of flying only a short distance, makes it quite possible for hunters to follow them by car. With several hunters to surround their position, some are bound to be shot. Then too, another of their habits — that of perching on trees, makes them very conspicuous. This again, makes them very vulnerable.

The Pinnated Grouse is gone from here, perhaps never to return, and possibly to extermination. The Carrier Pigeon, although once counted by millions is exterminated — and the Whooping Crane has not long to live. It is easily possible for our Provincial Bird Emblem to follow, if we keep on as we have been doing.

The very least we can do is to make a closed season for them next year. I hope it is not too late.

Pine Grosbeaks

Mary Brennan, R.R. 1, Leross, Sask.

On "Camp Wilderness", over C.B.C. recently the commentator remarked that Pine Grosbeaks are very irregular in their appearance. If that is so, we must be among the lucky ones this winter, for they have been quite numerous here since early fall. Almost any day their clear, sweet whistle can be heard from the shelterbelt; or they can be identified by their indulging flight as they move from bluff to bluff. Very interesting is their habit of whistling while in flight. They come quite close to the house too. Last week, during the warm spell, the family had a real thrill when one lit on the honeysuckle bush, in full view, not six feet from the window. It was dressed in the full glory of its rosy color, and seemed almost incongruous against a snowy background. A few minutes later, the same bird was splashing and bathing in a little puddle of snow-water under a south window, not four feet from our delightful eyes. This was on February 5th, surely almost a record for outdoor bathing!

A Strange Partnership

J. E. Roy, Meadow Lake

"Have any of our Blue Jay readers ever discovered a Hungarian Partridge nesting with a duck? In May, 1953, my uncle, Mr. Steve West of Birsay, Saskatchewan, made the unusual discovery right in his own farm yard. A mallard duck flew up from her nest in the grass, 30 yards from the house, and upon reaching the nest, my uncle discovered four Mallard eggs and 16 partridge eggs. Two days later, when he again inspected the nest, he found the Hungarian partridge setting on the mixed clutches, and the duck was nowhere to be found. At no time did he see the two birds setting together.

He then made the decision to destroy the duck eggs and let the partridge have the nest to herself. A few days later, upon returning to the nest, he discovered that the Hungarian's clutch had increased to 23. The duck was not seen again; and, to complete the story, the Hungarian hatched 22 youngsters.

WANT BIRDS ABOUT HOME?

Plant Wild Cherry Trees.

ART O. GELLERT, Yorkton

My home is right in the city of Yorkton. Until this year we were visited annually by 16 different species of wild birds, many nesting in the adjoining lots, only 50 x 100 feet, but thick with Choke Cherry, Pincherry and Saskatoon bushes. Last spring a new home appeared on this lot. It was cleared of all trees and equally absent were the many varieties of wild birds we had enjoyed these many years.

An **Oriole** pair, or their descendants having been building their hanging nests here for the past twenty years. They chose the tallest tree, a black poplar and although it may seem odd, they usually repaired the old nest. This tall poplar was half dry and quite often the **Downy Woodpecker** would tap for worms. One year a **Flicker** nested in a hollow in this tree.

Yellow Warblers were common visitors then and infrequently the **American Goldfinch** would honor us with a nesting — but this particular Goldfinch hasn't been in evidence for nearly ten years. **Blackbirds** always nested in the lot across the lane from the cherry stand and always fought with **English Sparrows** and with the Purple Martin's, nesting in the garage eaves or in the 18 room birdhouse in the backyard. This spring a pair of **Pintail Ducks** tried to nest in the small slough in the lot across the lane but too many people disturbed them, and after a week of trying, they flew away. Robins had several nests in the yard maple trees. Here, for several years, there was one so low that we could watch the eggs and the ultimate hatching of them. This pair of Robins finally lost trust in us after a neighbor boy climbed the maple "just to see the eggs", and fell to the ground with nest, branch and all.

We have had **House Wrens** for several years but at times they shun our wren bird-houses, although we cleaned them yearly — but they do nest in the vicinity somewhere and we often watch them hunting for grubs for their young. The visits we

had from the **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were attributed to the delphinium, hollyhock, and the apple trees in the yard. From our dining-room window my family had many thrilling sights watching the "helicopter" of birddom hover and flit about — forward and backward — with only a few inches separating them from our point of vision. The hollyhocks and delphiniums grew close to the windows and were a natural screen for the tiny birds, so seldom seen at close range.

The birds mentioned were the most common and yearly appeared on the scene. Many others, traveling through, or possibly enticed by the small wild apples on one of the yard trees or dried choke-cherries on the bushes next to our yard, provided us with many thrilling sights — like a whole clothesline filled with **Cedar Waxwings** — a truly smooth and lovely looking bird, and not afraid, either. Then **Chickadees** were always present to battle over crusts on the snow.

But since the cherry trees disappeared the species visiting our home, this year, numbered less than five. It is true that clearing the land often means a greater loss to us than gain. Great thought should be given to the final result before complete acreages are cleared from boundary to boundary, with no thought of windbreaks or cover for birds. You, I and those to come will miss the awakening of the birds in the morning and their singing which gives to us that contented feeling of "being glad to be alive."

ERRATA

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have informed Dr. Stuart Houston that their previous report of one of his Black-crowned Night Harons having been recovered at Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta, was in error. Although the actual band had been submitted to Washington, their clerk had read the number incorrectly. The bird was a Mallard banded in Alberta by Steve Brace.

Yellow-breasted Chat Nesting Near Fort Qu'Appelle

By DR. STUART HOUSTON

Th summer's most unusual record was that of a Yellow-breasted Chat nesting in the Qu'Appelle Valley near Fort San. E. M. Callin first heard its song on the evening of June 7th and next morning was finally able to locate the source of the unusual voice. As Mr. Callin reported in "Chickadee Notes", the Winnipeg Free Press:

"I sat down and in a few minutes he flew up to a commanding position in a tree and commenced his amazing repertoire of notes. During the next half hour I watched him from distances of 35 to 60 yards as he moved from tree to tree or down into the scrub and back up again. Seldom was he silent during this time, the singing or scolding ceasing just long enough for him to engage in his clownish antics — bowing or swinging his head from side to side or indulging in the most ridiculous flight manoeuvres to the next tree. A number of his notes are of a quality similar to those of the Brown Thrasher but the delivery is quite different and there is much more hesitation."

Although Mr. Callin visited the area at various times of day, he only saw the Chat in the early morning and heard him singing in the morning and also in the late evening between 9:45 and 11:45 p.m. His next exciting discovery he reported to the "Blue Jay" as follows:

"The obvious conclusion was that nesting was in progress but it was not until the early morning of June 21st that both birds were sighted. By this time the male was becoming more shy and his vocal efforts had been markedly reduced.

"On the morning visit of June 21st I felt that the time was now ripe to commence the search for a nest and in my mind selected the starting point for the search. Somewhat breathless and excited I returned at 4:30 in the afternoon to the chosen starting point. To my amazement I found the nest after a search of only ten minutes. Neither of the birds were seen at this visit, but the nest was constructed so exactly according to the descriptions in the bird books.

"On June 27th I again visited the

area and found the bird on the nest. She remained on the nest until I was about six feet away, then she slipped away quickly but silently. The nest contained four Chat eggs plus one Cowbird egg, the latter egg being removed. The nest was 2½ feet from the ground in a Saskatoon tree five feet in height. The nest was bulky for a bird the size of the Chat but well constructed—sturdily built and well "cupped." On July 6th the nest contained three young Chats and one egg, this egg obviously being infertile."

Apart from the Frenchman River Valley near Eastend, where it breeds, and the adjacent Cypress Hills region, the Chat has been recorded from only one other area in Saskatchewan. On June 26, 1939, Norman Clarke of Tregarva informed the Provincial Museum that a pair were resident in a coulee on his farm eight miles NNW of Regina; they were carrying food but a nest was not found. They have been found nesting at Kenmare, North Dakota, just 25 miles south of the Canadian border. When present, this species is frequently heard but seldom seen. Other Saskatchewan observers should be on the lookout for it.

(Incidentally, the mention of the Yellow-breasted Chat at Fairy Hill by Clarissa Stewart in the Jan. 1953 "Blue Jay" was in error.—C.S.H.)

A Towhee in December

Charles Thacker, Broadview, Sask.

On December 14th last I saw a Towhee just off the Pipestone Creek valley. He was feeding on the road on some spilled grain. When I stopped the car and got out he flew across the ditch. I placed the car where I wanted it, as near the grain as I could, to get the best possible vision, climbed in and waited. In a few minutes he worked his way across the ditch and back to the "feast." I observed him for a considerable time, noting that he was quite able to fly. On December 15th I went that way again — and found him again. On the 16th he was gone. Rather late for the Towhee up this way, I think!

Untimely Snow: Woeful weather for Birds

MARION NIXON, Wauchope, Sask.

Snow after the migration of warblers has begun may spell disaster for many, and discomfort for all such minute scraps of bird life. This is especially true of the migrants that depend on a meat diet to keep up their energy and warmth, so sorely taxed by excessive cold, for the cold keeps insects sluggish also. Mosquitoes that were plentiful during the three hot days which tempted the birds back here, were suddenly no longer visible. Flies and small beetles hid in crevices again, waiting for more sun.

It is not surprising if a bird's strength is depleted during a cold, wet, blustery spell of weather that keeps on too long. How grateful the birds are for the shelter provided by planted windbreaks at such a time on their migration! They find rest from the wind's buffeting, and suffer less wind-chill; and on the bark of the trees they may find enough scale insects to tide them over till insects fly again.

In spring, 1953, after one week-end inch of rain, the snow lay white on the ground again. It proved to be the background against which we saw several unfamiliar birds, who sought refuge within the forty-year-old, twenty-row-deep windbreak about our farm home. The most noticeable of these was a tiny Redstart, which came into the verandah several times after flies that had dropped from the screen to the sill because of cold weather. The Redstart was less timid than many birds, perhaps because it was unused to people, and so had not learned fear; perhaps because it was too hungry and weak to care. At any rate, later in the day it seemed to be suffering badly from cold, hardly able to fly, and easily tipped by the wind as it hopped from one snowy twig on the ground to another, hunting food. The Redstart has a habit of holding its wings out a little from its body, as though flaunting its beautiful red and jet plumage. This must make it even more liable to get chilled in such weather, and certainly gave the wind gusts more chance to buffet it about. We could keep within reach of it

with a makeshift net, but attempts to catch it proved unsuccessful. It seemed all too likely it must succumb before another morning, without protection within doors.

During the morning, our attention was called to a thrush beneath the trees, foraging among the robins. While stalking it, to try to identify its species, our eyes were caught by a glimpse of grey and yellow against the snow. This proved to be a Myrtle warbler, and we soon realized that the shelterbelt was swarming with its fellow migrants. In fact, since that day, we have learned that many people in the district also have become acquainted with this pretty little bird. We seemed to be in the midst of the Myrtle warbler movement north. Slaty grey on the back, it has yellow patches on the top of the head, on the rump and at each side of the breast, but separated from the white breast by a broad dark bar. Tail and wings are brownish, the wings with two white bars. The females are less colorful and have broken lines of spotting on the flanks instead of the dark bars.

Another unfamiliar bird we found, busily scratching among the leaves on the ground under the trees, was a Towhee, which we had seen here only once before . . . one other snowy spell in spring. In color, it was almost as red and black as the Redstart, though nearly as large as a robin, and its bib made sharp contrast to the white underparts. There was a flirt of white outer tail feathers each time it retreated down the corridor between trees.

More familiar birds abounded. It seemed as though the robins from acres around had come for a feast of earthworms on the lawn, and the grackles shuffled about amongst them with their beaks uptilted in the direction of more threatened rain. From the trees came the clear melody of the White-throat sparrow, "Oh, sweet, Canada, Canada, Canada," and many of these flitted from one quarter of the shelterbelt to another. Among the spruce that flank the northern side, a band of Harris sparrows moved shyly about, sounding

their plaintive, pure couplets, each on its own individual key of a harmonious minor scale. Yet each two notes, sweet and drawn well out, never interrupted the repeated note of another of the flock. When disturbed they moved on from branch to branch, with little sipping call notes in a worried tone.

Toward evening, other birds sought shelter from the wind. Even a handsome Mallard and his mate waddled across the lawn, pausing to preen their wings; and a Killdeer slanted down and ran along the driveway . . . a thing we seldom see in the house yard though they commonly frequent the open ground near the barn.

A flock of swallows materialized out of the sky and took refuge on the powerline wires leading to the house. Here they fluffed up their plumage and tucked in their heads, companionably snuggled together in twos and threes and fours along the wire. They seemed very weary. We could watch them from ring-side seats, by going to the south window upstairs, and found that there were four species among the little band. Most of them were Tree swallows, iridescent green-on-navy backs with white underparts and blunt V-tails. There were two Barn swallows, with reddish-brown breasts and the long "swallow tail" feathers. One Cliff swallow was clearly identified by his broad white forehead patch, and there were two softly brown Bank swallows with creamy breasts outlined at the throat by a darkish bar. These two also had blunt V-tails. As evening drew on, they cuddled closer together, till they all crowded about a foot of each line, close to the house wall, thankful for the oasis of quiet out of the wind.

Endlessly reiterated, the mourning dove's dismal plaint seemed particularly suitable to the weather, and to the feelings of all the migrants snowbound here.

Did you know that chickadees like dead honeybees, but they never eat the part with the stinger in it? Our bees died and we cleaned the frames up and put them where we could watch the birds eat, but they dropped the stinger part on the snow.

—Edith Hanson, Viking, Alta.
(Submitted by Marion Nixon)

Wee Things

This earth is full with tiny things,
Everywhere, always present;
Each little mite in its own right
Is beautiful and pleasant.

In all the world there's never a
breeze

But makes some bird wing fleeter;
There's not a leaf among the trees
But makes the scene much sweeter.

There's not one ray of the great,
great sun

But makes the day look brighter;
There isn't a song but makes some-
one

Gayer, gladder, lighter.

And never is there a busy bee
But helps to give the notion
Its work's of prime necessity
To keep this world in motion.

A trickling stream there never was
But fed some green grass tender,
And ne'er was there a sparkling drop
But helped some sapling slender.

There never was in the wide, wide
world

One glorious sunset splendour
But made the heart of some sweet
one

Flutter in expectation:
Each gift of every wee, wee thing
Helps beautify this great Creation.

John Anton Popoff,
Yorkton, April, 1917

From the first week in January for over a month we had a flock of about three dozen Pine Grosbeaks, in a bluff by the house. They seemed to be eating rose berries. There were quite a few males, almost all a bright rosy red. This is the first I've really seen them close up. They are really beautiful.

Mrs. Thomas Lowes,
Wimmer, Sask.

Among enemies of the ideals of conservation are the thoughtless, the reckless and the wrongheaded. But I think the one that gives you the cold shudders is the almost completely immoral type, who with no conception of the social consequences of his actions — who doesn't care anyway, and who is governed by his knowledge of what he can get away with.

A. J. Hudson, Mortlach

Prince Albert Natural History Society

The BLUE JAY welcomes the news of the formation of another local natural history group — this time at Prince Albert. The inaugural meeting was held on January 22, followed by the first executive meeting on February 22. Heading the group is Mr. Ed. W. Brooman, known as one of Prince Albert's most enthusiastic naturalists. He is president, Miss Grace Crooks is the secretary, and I. C. Collins is the treasurer. Other members of the executive are R. F. Arnold, Mrs. R. Mayson, Mrs. A. McKay, Mrs. Mary McIsaac, Barry Collins, J. Ross Homer and M. A. Welsh.

Plans have been made for monthly meetings from October to April, and field trips will be held during the spring and summer. The formation of this group, we hope, will be an incentive for others to follow. Each forms a link which will strengthen the solidarity of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, and the BLUE JAY is sure to benefit, not only by new members, but by contributions relating to nature observations covering a much wider field.

CONGRATULATIONS, PRINCE ALBERT!
SUCCESS TO YOUR SOCIETY!

North American Co-operative Bird Migration Study—1954

We hope most of our members will take part in this year's bird migration study — in co-operation with bird watchers, across the continent. In addition to first seen dates, make note of any heavy migration waves for the species involved. The species chosen are fairly common and easy to identify, so that everyone can take part. Please keep **FIRST SEEN DATES** for the following 31 species:

Canada Goose, Marsh Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Nighthawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Am. Crow, House Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Red-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Ovenbird, Redstart, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow.

This is an excellent school project. Anyone taking part should obtain Taverner's "Birds of Canada," or, better, Peterson's "Field Guide to

the Birds," so that all identifications may be accurate.

Send your list to Mr. Carmichael by June 15th or July 1st.

Sask. N.H.S. Outing at Greenwater Lake

A summer outdoor meeting of our Society will be held at Greenwater Lake Provincial Park, north of Kelvington, on Saturday and Sunday, June 13th and 14th. Groups will study the wildlife of the area, and on Saturday evening President Ralph Stueck will show some of his famous nature movies—in the dining hall, or outdoors "under the stars" if weather permits.

Camping space is available. There is a store and dining room. Hotel rooms are \$2 single, \$2.50 for two persons; light housekeeping cabins are \$4 and \$5 and accommodate four to six people. Dr. Stuart Houston is in charge of reservations, and those wishing to attend should write him at once, at Box 279, Yorkton, stating what accommodation is desired.

Bring your family to one of Saskatchewan's finest beauty spots and make our first summer outdoor meet a success.

Plan now to attend.

NATURE'S SCHOOLHOUSE

It is with pleasure that we publish the results of the **BLUE JAY** and the judges, Mrs. John Hubbard, of Grenfell, and Mrs. Stuart Houston. Zulkoskey arrived too late to be examined by the judges, but is certainly was not classified higher than third. The story is highly commendable. Entrants will be eligible for the grand Jubilee Year prize. See rules of adhered to. The deadline for the reception of material for the next issue.

The first three prizes will be a Field Guide of the winner's choice to the **BLUE JAY**.

1st—**Henry Savard**. Prize donated by Dr. C. J. Houston, Yorkton.

2nd—**Bob Buhr**. Prize donated by Dr. Sigga Houston, Yorkton.

3rd—**George M. Hruska**. Prize donated by Dr. Stuart Houston.

Honorable mention: **Jimmy Zulkoskey** and **Anne Matthews**.

A Marshland Experience

Henry Savard, Stony Plain Memorial High School, Carvel, Alberta
(Age 15)

The stillness of the summer morning was broken by a piercing "kuk, kuk-k-k-k-k-kuk." I remained motionless and peered into the grasses and reeds of the marsh, trying to get a glimpse of the bird that was making the strange noise. The sound was uttered again, not more than twenty feet from me, but still I could not detect the owner of that bewitching voice. Finally I gave up and started for home, very puzzled and thrilled from the morning's occurrence. What wanderer of the marshes had made that odd cry? The question remained unanswered, but I vowed I would return and find out.

Not more than a week later, I again visited the marsh, hoping to learn more of the strange bird that seemed to be constantly under cover. I cautiously entered the tall grasses of the marsh and began to walk as silently as possible, hoping that the clever hider I was in search of would be unaware of my presence. I halted and stood stalk-still, for from out of the reeds and grasses ahead came the rolling cackle that had lured me into this wet secluded spot. I immediately started forward, but when I had reached the place from whence the voice had come, nothing could be seen.

Suddenly I spotted a little path in the mud, made by the passing of many tiny feet. I followed this path for a short distance, and what I

found was more than I could have hoped for. There, in an elevated clump of grass, was a cleverly concealed nest. The stems of the grasses were so arranged as to form a canopy over the nest. In it were twelve eggs, buff in color, and spotted chiefly on the large end with brown and gray.

My attention was averted from the nest by a rustling noise. Out into an open patch of mud, not more than ten feet away, ran a bird which I had never seen before. The upper part of the body was olive-brown. The belly and under coverts were white, and the sides and flanks were barred with a slaty black and white. The forepart of the head, the chin, and the throat were black, and the sides of the head, the neck, together with the breast were a bluish grey. This bird began to run about, spreading its stubby wings and uttering a few cackling notes. The display only lasted for a short while, and the bird disappeared just as suddenly as it had appeared.

When I returned home I learned from a bird book that this bird is known as the Sora Rail. Although little known to most people, it is one of the most abundantly occurring birds of North America.

Feathered Courage

By Bob Buhr, Grade VII,
Mennon School, No. 1508

Last spring a pair of Brown Thrashers had a nest, made of dry twigs and weeds under a fallen log in our calf pasture. It was very well

BOYS' and GIRLS' SECTION

ory contest. The type of the material submitted is outstanding in quality, Yorkton, felt that the quality was nearly equal. The entry from Jimmy hy of honorary mention. Because of his age, the entry of George Hruska may be necessary later to make two classes of entries. All of these ontest in the 1953 Christmas issue. We ask that these rules be strictly be April 15. (Earlier than mentioned in the rules.)

those receiving honorable mention are being awarded a year's subscription

ton.

concealed and I doubt if I would have discovered it if it had not been for one of the birds, which flew up just in front of me. There were four oddly yet beautifully colored eggs in the nest.

After that I visited the nest often. Each time I came to the nest the birds made a great fuss and often dived right at me, only to swerve to one side and whiz past my head.

A few days later two eggs hatched. The third egg disappeared and I don't know what became of it. After that they dived at me more and more and seemed to come closer to my head with each dive, with their dagger-like bill. By then I was getting a bit frightened, but my curiosity wouldn't allow me to leave without seeing the young ones again. So I pulled my coat over my head and walked up to the nest to take a peek. At that moment one of the parents struck me in the back. It didn't hurt but I walked away and didn't bother the courageous Brown Thrasher until I was sure the young had left the nest.

About two weeks later I went to see the nest. The young had left and the parents had disappeared—but the fourth egg was still there, unhatched.

An Experience With A Horned Owl

Jimmy Zulkoskey, Grade VI, Prince Edward School, Prince Albert

On Wednesday afternoon, January 13th, my sister and I found an injured owl on our way to school. The



Mr. E. W. Brooman, President of the Prince Albert Natural History Society, and Principal of Prince Edward School, feeding the owl.

owl was hanging upside down on a branch. We tried to capture it, and after a hard time managed to put it in a box. It seemed very sick but could fly a little.

We brought it to school the same afternoon and a large cage was soon made. In a few days everyone was interested in Hooty's welfare.

The owl was savage at first, but soon kindness overcame its fears. It soon learned to take the food that we gave it. It took no notice of the children, but when a dog came into

Nature's School House

the room, the owl puffed out its feathers and tried to fly at it.

Hooty would take meat from our teacher's hand. It would eat the food like a dog gulping chunks of meat. It always took the food gently and never tried to bite Mr. Brooman.

All this time we noted that something was wrong with Hooty. Our teacher thought that he had been shot, but he didn't want to hurt Hooty in order to find out.

On Friday, January 29th, Hooty took a sudden turn for the worst. On Saturday, despite our care, Hooty was dead.

Later the owl was examined and it was found that it had apparently flown into a wire and broken a bone in its chest.

Camp Mascot

Anne Mathews, Age 14,
Grade VIII, Nipawin Public School

One summer while we were holidaying in our cabin at Fishing Lake, we happened to look out of the window—and what do you think we saw? There was a bear cub, eating scraps out of a syrup pail that was sitting on a table on the lot next to ours. The little fellow had to stand on its hind legs to reach the pail with its paws. The queer thing about it was that he wouldn't let the pail roll off the table.

Teddy, as we called him, soon had the scraps cleaned up and came walking around the cabin. He would look through the window at us. Our dog, Pat, got very excited. We let Pat outside and he ran after Teddy, chasing him through the bush. Pat came back puffing. In a few minutes we saw the bear peeking around a tree—away they went again.

By this time the dishes were washed and Daddy thought he would go for a boat ride. Pat went down to the beach with us to watch. When Daddy came back to shore he told us what had been happening behind our backs. We were standing on the beach and on the bank above us Teddy had been watching too.

Several campers with their tents pitched at the Rangers' Beach were disturbed during the night by the cub prowling among their supplies.

We saw Teddy occasionally after that, but as more people came in, his visits were not so frequent. Finally we had to leave for home and on our return visits we didn't see any more of Teddy.

Chipper—The Squirrel

George M. Hruska, Gerald, Sask.

Grade XII, Age 19

Red squirrels may often become aggravating nuisances once they become established in a farm yard. They will gnaw holes in practically every building in the yard. This is just what happened when dad found a squirrel doing its contemptible work in the ice house and workshop. He shot the squirrel, but at the time of the shooting did not know that the same squirrel was rearing her family in an empty Bluebird house which she found to be ideal for the purpose.

Luckily there was only one young in her litter for I took the orphan into the house and started it on its adopted life by feeding it milk-soaked bread with an eye-dropper. Since "Chipper" was about a month old when I took him in the house, he didn't like the idea of the eye-dropper. I therefore tried the spoon and saucer method and found that this was just what he wanted. In a short time he started eating almonds which we had to buy to keep his tummy full. He also ate other things such as sunflowers, corn, peanuts, barley, lettuce, carrots, etc. His favorite item however was a spoon or two of fruit



Photo of Chipper by G. Hruska

Nature's School House

juice which he finally begged at mealtime as he went from one person to another.

In the fall, when storage time came, he hid almost every kind of food in his large bed (a box 6'x3'x3', with a nest in one corner). We even picked wild hazelnuts to help him out. The funniest part of all was that there would be two or three nuts in every space and corner of the house, including everybody's hair **and** pockets. The majority of the stuff, however, went into his bed.

We kept him loose in the verandah for the whole summer and fall, only letting him into the kitchen at feeding time. About this time he started chewing holes in the wall, so we figured it was time to let him out, as none of us had the heart to kill him. This we did, and he thoroughly enjoyed his freedom.

Since we live on the very banks of the Cutarm Valley, he would spend most of his time there, only coming home in the morning and at noon to get his nuts and fruit juice, and then in the evening to sleep in his nest in the house. Then one day, for some reason or other, he failed to come for his meal. We never saw "Chipper" again.

He was a very tame fellow. We could play with him and pat him anywhere. What he liked best was for somebody to stretch out a bare arm and let him slide down it—like on a fire-escape. He wasn't afraid of anything. He would tease the dog, and cats endlessly by jumping on them very agilely or biting their tails. Perhaps one of these pranks led to his downfall.

A Feeding Block

Geo. M. Hruska, Gerald, Sask.

The accompanying photograph shows a Chickadee sitting on one of my feeding blocks which has holes plugged with lard and tallow. Since I have up to twenty Chickadees at my feeding station there are always one or two birds who are brave enough to eat from my hand, so a close-up picture isn't hard to get.



A Flicker's Charm

Donald Hooper, Somme, Sask.

To me, the Yellow-shafted Flicker is a very interesting bird. Although he can't sing like a Red-eyed Vireo, there is something charming about the way he emphasizes the words, "flicker, flicker, flicker," as if he were announcing his presence. He is not arrayed in brilliant orange like the Baltimore Oriole, still it is a thrill to see his polka-dot breast, black neck-piece, the brown black-barred back, the red triangle at the back of his head, the white rump, the black V at the base of the tail, and Oh! what a beautiful yellow he shows under his wings and tail as he flies by.

In the summertime as I walked through the pasture I was startled by the rustle of wings. Then I saw a Flicker fly up from an ant hill and glide along, as only woodpeckers can, and land on a distant fence post. He was a majestic silhouette as he made his flicker-call. The event leaves a



Flicker at Nesting Hole

charm with me that I shall not soon forget.

I took the picture by remote control with a Portra 2 lens at 19 inches at f/11 and speed at 1/100 of a second.

My Little Nature World

Madeline B. Runyan, Punnichy, Sask.

During the summer of 1953 I found a poor bird breathing its last under my clothesline. Evidently the unfortunate little thing had flown into the wire. It was an entirely new bird to me—and I have lived here all my life. Not having Peterson's Field Guide (I now have one), I did not identify it closely enough, but it was either an Olive-backed Thrush, or a Gray - checked Thrush. Peterson shows that there is a very slight difference between them, of which I was not aware at the time.

During the very severe weather of the past January, we found a tiny owl which had perished in the straw stack. I suppose even the mice were not out in such weather. The little owl measures only 6½ inches from beak to tail. Because of its black bill and other markings, we have identified it as a Saw-Whet Owl.

Our lunch counter in an elm near our kitchen window is constantly visited by the little Chickadees, who have to move off whenever the Downy Woodpecker arrives. He, in turn, makes himself scarce, when his big cousin, the Hairy Woodpecker comes.

A Survey of Birds Nesting in a Given Area

By E. H. Brooman, Prince Albert

This survey grew out of a class discussion on environment and adaptation. At the time we had been discussing the fact that some birds and animals favor environments near man while others prefer environments as far removed from man as possible.

It was decided to attempt to discover how many and what kind of birds nested in our own school district.

The Prince Edward School district is composed of some forty city blocks. Most of this is residential and there are few vacant areas. In addition to this there is an unimproved area which for the most part is cleared.

In much of the district the boulevard is well established. In some sections the trees are several decades old. Many of the homes are reasonably well landscaped. All-in-all, the district is excellent for this type of survey.

The purpose, then, was to make a count of all visible birds' nests. Only nests which could be seen from the sidewalk area were included. Each student was supplied with a mimeographed sheet and allotted a certain area to survey. So that there would be a minimum of errors, instructions were simplified and few.

The survey showed:

Total number of nests, 189.

Total in Boulevards, 64; those high, 24; medium, 35; low, 5.

Private Trees and Shrubs, 92; those high 30; medium, 34; low, 28.

Total in Hedges, 20. Others, 13.

It should be noted that no consideration was given to birds nesting in boxes nor was any consideration given to areas other than adjacent to sidewalks.

Considering the number of nests that had probably been destroyed we see that the bird population would be considerable. Assuming three young were raised in each nest, and two adult birds attended each nest, we would have a population of almost 1000 birds. Indeed, it is quite possible that there were at least twice this number.

Since all nests were roughly classified according to size, and since the types of birds nesting is known, a rough estimate of the different kinds of birds could be determined. The possible order might be: Robin, House Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Purple Finch.

It was felt that this survey could become a general thing and perhaps could be used to estimate bird numbers in other places.

Jack—The Canada Jay

Mrs. W. D. Woolrich, Clair, Sask.



After reading Mr. Gilroy's article in the "Western Producer" on the Canada Jay, we thought perhaps the readers of the "Blue Jay" would like to hear of one who visited us last winter.

We first noticed it stealing the Chickadees' suet. After a few days it would come quite close when we called, "Jack!" It became so tame that before spring we were able to take the snap, shown on this page, of my son with Jack on his arm. It was after the bread he was holding.

Other visitors, Waxwings and Grosbeaks, enjoy the crabapples. A few days ago I noticed a woodpecker had filled quite a big crack in a telephone pole with suet.

I have a very warm corner for our winter birds—they help brighten our winter days and seem more like faithful friends than our summer visitors.

Some Butterfly Observations

Ronald Hooper, Somme, Sask.

There is something about butterflies that is unsurpassed in any other organism. Something that is found in the flitting of fritillaries, the sallying of meadow-browns, and the dashing of skippers as they bolt forth at your feet and make a swift, low flight, drop suddenly to the ground and remain motionless. Has God created another creature with the charm of a swallow-tail, or the beauty of a tiny blue?

Some butterflies are easily caught, but there is always some gayly coloured speeder who will test your skill with the net. What adds to the interest of butterfly collecting is the chance of catching wind-blown strays. These may be carried with the wind several hundred miles from where they were hatched. It often makes one wish he had a band on them so he could see how far they had travelled.

Like birds, butterflies have their times and their seasons of appearance, although their appearance depends more directly on the weather than it does with birds. Have we winter butterflies? Yes, we have, for every species must pass our bleak northern winters in some form or other, either as eggs or pupae, or in hibernation as larvae (caterpillars) or adults. The tortoise shells and commas hibernate in the adult form. We have found the Mourning Cloak hibernating in grain stocks, the American Tortoise-shell in lumber piles, and the Compton Tortoise in log buildings.

Like other things butterflies have their cycles. Last year the Cosmopolite was by far the commonest species. This year we didn't see one. The condition of the Red Admiral was similar. These species migrate to a certain extent, so perhaps that has something to do with it.

It is interesting to try to raise butterflies from caterpillars. What a big appetite they have! How fast it makes them grow! But make sure it is a butterfly caterpillar you are raising. We once ignorantly fostered a family of sawflies.

One day this summer I found a pupa-case on the under-side of a

Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*) leaf. The outside was covered with a sort of a netting. Through the netting you could see something orange that occasionally made a slight movement. I thought for sure it was some kind of copper, but to my surprise it turned out to be a Curculionid weevil. However, this is not so disappointing as it seems, for it is part of our small, but fastly growing collection of beetles. It is surprises like this that help make things interesting for the student of nature.

BUTTERFLIES

If you are now collecting butterflies in Saskatchewan, or are interested in starting this fascinating hobby, will you please let me know, as I am trying to gather as much information as possible on their distribution in this province. This field is somewhat understudied and a thorough research requires the co-operation of as many naturalists as possible.

—Ronald Hooper, Somme

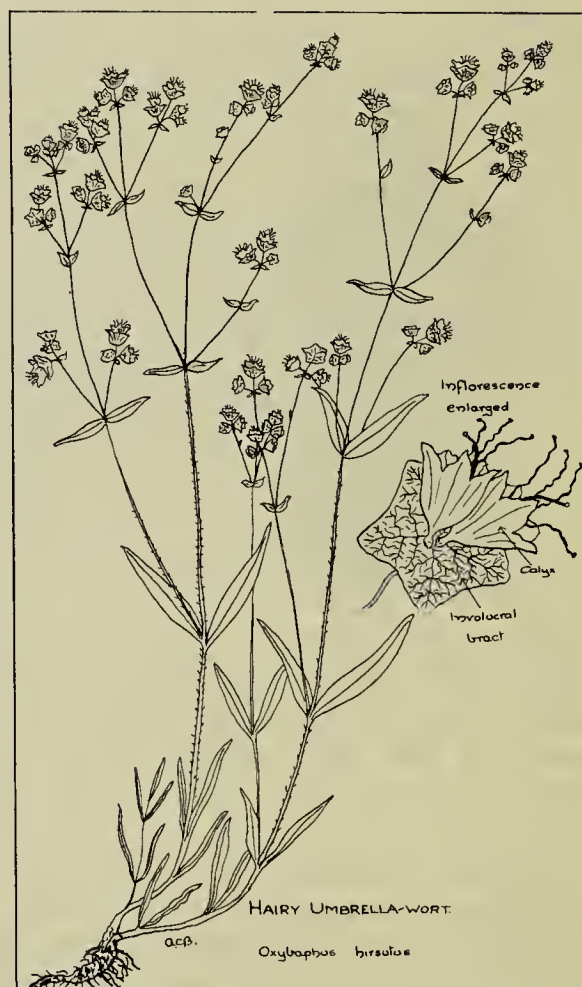
Umbrella-worts in Saskatchewan

ARCHIE BUDD, Swift Current

The Umbrella-worts have rather peculiar flowers and are a little puzzling when first encountered. Below the flowers is a membranous, five sided involucre bract which generally flattens out when the flowers mature. On this bract are from one to five flowers, with no petals but with coloured united sepals, generally pinkish in colour. The number of stamens varies from three to five in each flower, and they protrude conspicuously when the flowers first open. The base of the calyx is constricted or drawn in just above the single seeded ovary. The leaves vary somewhat but are generally lanceolate or linear-lanceolate, fairly thick and are borne oppositely on the stem, with either a very short stalk or none at all.

The commonest species in Saskatchewan is the Hairy Umbrella-wort, (*Oxybaphus hirsutus*) which bears glandular hairs and is found on light sandy soils. There is a form of this species which is almost hairless and this is about as plentiful as the hairy form.

Another species is the Heart-leaved Umbrella-wort, (*Oxybaphus nyctagineus*) a native of eastern Manitoba and the States adjacent to the south. This has larger, ovate to cordate leaves, mostly with definite stalks and reddish coloured inflorescence. This plant seems to be spreading westward along the railway tracks and in some places near Swift Current has taken full possession of the cinder fill alongside the tracks and is competing for domin-

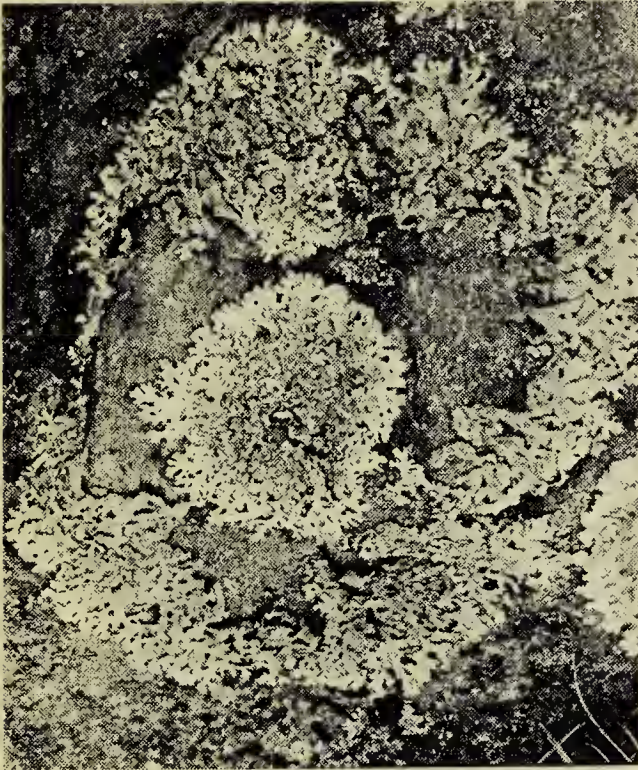


ance with the Smooth catchfly.

The garden plant, Four-o'clock or Marvel of Peru is one of the Umbrella-worts as is the plant from which jalap, the purgative, is obtained. The Umbrella-worts have been placed in several genera, *Allionia*, *Oxybaphus*, and more recently, have been put into *Mirabilis*. Probably the common name has reference to the somewhat umbrella shaped involucre. Dr. Stevens, the well known botanist of North Dakota, fittingly calls it Wild Four-o'clock.

MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

LLOYD T. CARMICHAEL, Regina



A Common Lichen

Among many plants and animals there are interesting examples of a very intimate type of mutual helpfulness, that of symbiosis. The dual relationship between certain unlike organisms is so fundamental that one cannot exist without the help of the other.

To illustrate these phenomena of nature we will discuss the peculiarities and values of two types of plants, in appearance, as far apart as the poles, in value, both economic and aesthetic — the lowly lichens and our beautiful native orchids, the Lady's Slippers.

Most of us are familiar with lichens, those scaly incrustations which dress up exposed rocks on dry hillsides in colors of yellow and red, of gold and brown and white. We have marvelled at their beauty also as they cling like splashes of paint to the bark of trees or hang pendant from their branches. Few perhaps realize that the lichen is not one plant but a curious association of two — a fungus and an alga. Life in the environment in which they live would be impossible for either alone. Together they survive because each contributes something necessary to the welfare of the other.

The alga, being green, manufactures food, not only for itself but for the fungus. In return the fungus protects the alga against mechanical injury and against evaporation and absorbs and retains water for the use of both in time of drought. Here are two organisms, living together in intimate relationship. Such an association is symbiosis.

Of lichens, Ruskin writes: "Meek creatures; the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dustless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of time." Lichens are remarkable chiefly for the extreme conditions under which they can endure unharmed. They are so constructed that all they need for survival is the moisture they can gather from the air. They can thrive where other forms of vegetation must perish.

Some lichens, containing quantities of starch are valuable articles of food for man and beast. Iceland Moss (which is not a moss) and Reindeer Lichen, which grow abundantly in northern regions, not only form the principal food for reindeer but both have been used as food for man. The manna, of scriptures, is supposed to have been a species of lichen. Some species furnish dye; one of the best known being litmus, so extensively used in chemistry as a test for acids and bases.

Among the rare and beautiful flowers that adorn our native woods and wilds, few, if any, can compare with the lovely plants belonging to the orchid family. Outstanding among these in Northern and Eastern Saskatchewan are the Lady's Slippers. Whether we regard these charming flowers for the singularity of their form, the exquisite texture of their tissues, or the delicate blending of their colors, we must acknowledge them to be altogether lovely and worthy of our admiration. These plants, also, form one of the partners in symbiosis.

Their seeds will germinate only in the presence of a certain fungus which thrives in the type of soil where we find them growing. Not

only during germination but through out its entire life is this plant dependent on this particular species of fungus, and these fungi cannot live without the larger plant. The Lady's Slipper has no root hairs like other plants which grow in soil, and for that reason cannot extract from the soil the essentials of life. The fungus performs this duty and passess on to the plant the elements its needs in soluble form. In return the mother plant exchanges some of the food which it has manufactured in its green leaves. Here again a fungus forms a most useful partner in symbiosis.

The Lady's Slipper, like many flowering plants also forms a partnership of mutual helpfulness with the insect world. The relationship, although often called symbiosis, is not quite as intimate as the ones described and for this reason is sometimes known as Mutualism. In return for an abundant supply of nectar, the bee makes cross pollination possible. The flower is remarkably adapted for this purpose. Where ordinarily the flower's stamen would be, there is a neat little trap-door which admits insects into the inflated and conspicuous sac where the nectar is secreted. When once inside the bee cannot force the door up again so has to escape to the side of it, receiving a shower of pollen as it makes its exit. Some of this is dusted off on the stigma of the next flower visited.

We have four species of Lady's Slipper in Saskatchewan. They all belong to the genus *Cypripedium*, a word which means the "Shoe of Venus". The Indian word

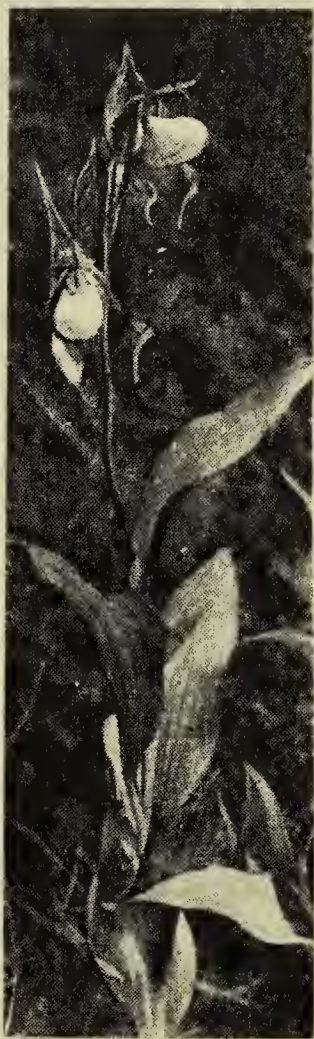
for a related genus, "The Moccasin Flower," conveys the same idea.

Most of these flowers grow in tamarac swamps, in moist coniferous woods or near forest creeks. One species, the Small Yellow Lady's Slipper is very fragrant and is found in rich poplar woods. The Large Yellow Lady's Slipper is closely related to this, belonging to the same species (*Calceolus*), but of a different variety. The Northern Lady's Slipper (*C. passerinum*) is pale lilac or white with purple spots. Perhaps the most beautiful of all is the Snowy Lady's Slipper (*C. hirsutum*), with its white flowers and conspicuous lip, decked with stripes of redish-purple. Some of the plants grow up to a height of two feet. A very near relative to this flower, pink and white in color (*Cypripedium reginae*) is the floral emblem of Minnesota, now fully protected from extinction by the laws of that State.

All of these flowers are scarce in Saskatchewan. What can we do to preserve these beautiful plants? Can we, too, join with it in a symbiotic partnership? It will be sure to cooperate, for in turn for protection it will return to us beauty which cannot be duplicated. What a tragedy if this flower should become extinct, due to thoughtlessness. What are the consequences of picking such a flower? Here are a few points which we would do well to ponder over.

A year old plant is no larger than a sprout on a radish seed. Showy Lady's Slipper will often not blossom until about twenty years old — some, perhaps, until they are of fifty years of age. This delicate plant which grows in the soft shade of the forest may be older than the forty feet poplar trees which skirt its fringe. We should think seriously before we disturb these plants produced by numerous microscopic seed, whose chance of germination and survival are a million to one, whose age perhaps is equal to our own, whose beauty is unsurpassed.

Urged on by a spirit of mutual helpfulness, let us strive by word, by act and by government legislation to protect them — for they are a national asset and a valuable heritage which future generations should have the same privilege of enjoying, as we have today.



*Lady's Slipper
Orchid*

THE PIGMY SHREW

RALPH STEUCK, Abernethy, Sask.



Pigmy Shrew

It was a dark midnight and the snow was gently falling as I returned from showing a movie at Indian Head. The car lights shone brightly on that November night. Old Mother Earth was all ready for the great white blanket. The leaves had fallen and the prairie grass and all the flowers were waiting to be covered. Yes! there was a great white stillness as the snow flakes came tumbling down — two inches had fallen.

Then down through the Qu'Appelle, far ahead of the car lights,

the eyes of a doe and fawn stood motionless by the roadside. There were fresh tracks where they had crossed the road some short time before, but not another mark or sign of living thing. Then strange to behold, I saw a moving line under the snow in the glare of the bright lights. Stopping the car, I hopped out and sure enough, there it was, moving like a raised vein on the back of the hand. Some tiny animal was bull-doing a tunnel across the road while the snow was soft. I made a grab at the moving end, only to find my friend, the Pigmy Shrew, with his long pointed nose covered with long hairs. With his caterpillar four-wheeled drive he was pushing like a bull-dozer through the snow.

He is the smallest mammal in the world, yet the busiest of all the animals. He must have something to eat every half hour. He is carnivorous in habits and eats twice his own weight of food every day. His temperature is 106. He is furnished with a poison fang used to kill animals much larger than himself. The shock of catching him is fatal within 24 hours. Yet that strange little animal is not afraid of our northern climate.

These shrews live entirely alone except for the mating season, then the mother rears the family alone. "The Taming of the Shrew" has never been done.

We Miss the Coyotes

Mrs. E. C. Boon, Tullis, Sask.

What, I wonder, is the public opinion on poisoning the Coyotes? I miss them. We live on a coulee bank and used to see them all winter — sometimes hear them till they got annoying. We don't raise sheep but they never bothered our chickens. I suppose they got the odd one, but we never missed them. I think it was foolish to poison them off indiscriminately.

It's easy to see how things become extinct. I have two boys five

and six years of age. They don't know a gopher when they see a picture of one. I don't think they ever saw a live one.

Last winter was colder than this one has been up to the present and there was more snow. Yet then the rabbits never got completely white and we even saw a weasel with a reddish color across its back, in January. There were Horned Larks about all winter, yet this year the rabbits have been white for a month or more, and I haven't seen a Horned Lark for six weeks. Apparently the weather hasn't as much to do with the creatures' habits as we suppose.

Rare Black Rabbit Taken

W. C. RICHARDSON, Brandon, Manitoba

Fifteen year old Clare Hillis hunting near his home 15 miles Northwest of Brandon, Manitoba bagged a pure black Snowshoe or bush rabbit. The rabbit was identified by Dr. R. D. Bird, Dominion Entomologist, as a very rare melanistic form, the direct opposite to an albino. For reasons not understood, at rare intervals nature produces a specimen of animal, insect, or bird, where an excess of pigment in the skin results in real or comparative blackness. The rabbit was sent to the Manitoba Provincial Museum where the find was confirmed. The specimen will be retained there. The Museum's records reported a possible "sight" of such a rabbit near The Pas, Manitoba, last June. Stuart Criddle, of Treesbank, who has been keeping records of mammals for many years, recalls only one other melanistic rabbit and that reported around the year 1880.

Those disappointed elk hunters may be interested to know that in company of Charles D. Bird and Dr.

R. D. Bird, I spent most of Boxing Day roaming the woods south of the Riding Mountain Park. The day was fine and mild and the snow six inches deep with a fresh fall during the night to wipe out old tracks. There were very few elk tracks to be seen although in the afternoon we did find where half a dozen had visited a hay stack bottom not long before we arrived. It looks as if the Department was right in refusing an elk season this year. Tracks of several large Timber Wolves were observed, some measuring almost four inches across. Besides four or five raven, we observed two Goshawks. The bush rabbits in the district were unusually scarce. Possibly they were feeling the hunting pressure of the hawks. Stuart Criddle tells me that the Goshawks are particularly hard on Sharptail and Ruffed Grouse. He thinks that it is not impossible that the increase and decline in the supply of grouse is tied in with the increase and decline of Goshawks. Ed. Finch of Brandon reports that Patmore's Nursery plot South of Brandon, frequented by grouse and Hungarian Partridge, is also frequented by Goshawks. The hawks were after food, other than the berries which attract the grouse. By the way, a Goshawk can often be brought within gun range by tossing a cap or some other object into the air. The hawks spot such things nearly half a mile away and come to investigate.

A Melanistic Gopher

J. S. Rowe, Winnipeg, Man.

Reading Mr. Yanchinski's article "The Gopher" in the last issue of the Blue Jay reminded me of an observation that may be of interest to Saskatchewan naturalists. Driving south from Big River near Bodmin in early August of 1952 we were suddenly surprised to see two black gophers in typical "picket pin" posture in a grassy roadside clearing. Having seen albinos but never before melanistic forms we stopped with some excitement to get a closer look. With a string snare and a little patience one of the pair was finally caught and dropped in a pail where we could examine him. It was indeed a coal black *Citellus richardsonii*, resembling exactly, except in coloration, the common yellow-brown flickertail. When we retailed the news in Big River it was found that the local inhabitants have known the black gophers for some time, one man said they have been around for "about forty years."

A Novel Feed Shelter

Bill Moncur, Boissevain, Man.

Here is a tip for anyone wishing to put up a feed shelter for our winter birds including upland game. Take a number of ten or twelve-foot poles and put them up in teepee style. Bind securely and tie sheaves of millet and wheat near the top. A shelter of this type should be put on the sunny side of a sheltered spot, such as poplar bluffs or clumps of willows. One will find that in a very short time these feeding spots become very popular.

The Great Extravaganza

HUGH McLAUGHLIN, Lewvan, Sask.

Here on the plains we have been basking in the sunshine and mild weather of a lovely fall. But the spring and summer were quite the opposite and in retrospect we can look back on the unusual.

Spring started out dry. There was barely enough snow to bring down a flood in the creek. Field work started early and even low spots on the land, usually flooded, were seeded right through. The ducks by-passed us to a certain extent and were not nesting in their usual numbers. Then came the unseasonable snow and frost that took such a toll of early nests.

Work had scarcely been resumed on the land when rain, again, drenched the countryside. I have sometimes visioned a living flowing stream and thought how poor in comparison a mere creek that subsided after the spring runoff. The next several weeks changed some of those ideas. Four inches of rain fell one night and thereafter an inch or two poured down on us whenever the extensive pools formed showed the least sign of retreating. And the water flowed: little rivulets into ditches — little ditches in channels and thence into great moving flats of water. When I pumped out my basement the water did not evaporate it merely flowed over the saturated earth — joined its fellows in the roadside ditch and set out for Hudson Bay, via Souris Creek. The other end of this magis fluid, perhaps, lapped on the shores of England and our little ponds were joined to the brotherhood of other waters that encircled the earth. Not clear glistening streams were these, but cloudy water — and always going downstream were floating snails.

You may wonder why I should recount all this, but in the face of what amounted to futility in regard to farming (Tillage seeding implements were not recovered from muddy flats till sometime in July) I thought I would report its effects on the creatures of nature — bewildering circumstances to them also. They — creatures with small rea-

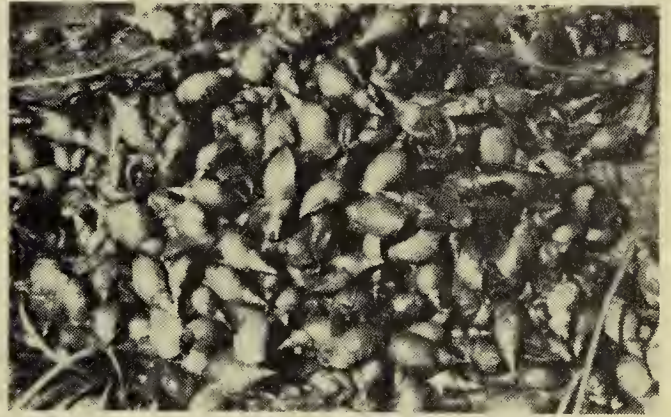


Photo by Hugh McLaughlin

soning — but supplied with divine guidance — how would they react?

There was a great return of ducks to the area, both Green and Blue-winged Teal being especially abundant. The Red-winged Blackbirds, whose nests and eggs had been saturated in the buck-brush along the creek, moved over a few feet, and over the water that still surged, built another nest — but higher. Higher seemed to be the theme and the duck nests were on ridges between fields or knolls. There were quite an influx of Bittern and Black-crowned Heron. Every low-lying ditch became a march with cat-tails. The Bittern could be heard in the evening right in the village, while the Muskrat and ducks made themselves at home in every roadside ditch. But most surprising was a quite pronounced number of Great Blue Herons. They must have been disturbed out of their usual colonies by the weather. I am quite sure that they never nested here. Possibly their trip to breeding grounds this year was a futile one.

Whatever the cause, these birds not normally seen here, except as an occasional fall migrant, graced nearly a dozen localities — big ponds or pools along the creek. One in particular claimed a pond north of town and could be seen all summer. It would rise at every passing car but always returned. There was an abundance of food. As flood waters retreated a great crop of minnows, snails and other aquatic life would find themselves trapped in diminishing pools where these stilted epicures could feast in leisure until the

sun's rays flicked out the last drop of water.

I thought to add to the variety of local pond life by bringing home three or four Leopard Frogs from a trip, and turning them loose. But all at once it seemed as if these agile ones were in every pool and dugout. Mother Nature had beaten me with her own bounteous hand. I had never seen one locally before.

A couple of years ago I brought home and planted a few coreopsis plants as they seemed to be quite a rarity in recent years — but again I had not counted on Nature. It was thus:

I was one day stricken to notice a yellow tinge come over several acres of ground that had emerged from the water and at once thought it must be a great crop of Sow Thistles, and wondered how to get at it. It was too muddy to get near to spray or to destroy by cultivation. However I waded out to investigate. To my surprise it turned out to be acres of Coreopsis. A million little eyes of yellow and maroon all turned by the west wind to face me. I had never seen these plants there before.

In other cultivating fields — long since civilized to wheat and mustard the wild marsh grass sprang up to remind us that we are not so far removed from the primitive. These seeds just lay hidden unknown until their day came.

The waters of the creek flowed on through June and July — not muddy now — instead a luscious growth of green algae — masses in the quiet waters, and long waving streamers where the water spread over a small dam. Such a goodly flowing stream looked as if it should contain fish. Such was not the case. Instead, feeding on their submerged pasture, grazing like contented sheep on a hillside — clustered in places like fat grapes — were Great Pond Snails helping to clean the mossy channel.

Finally in August thin places showed in the stream. It was impossible to get across to do field work or to cut hay. Trapped by weeds in the shallow water were about four inches of snails — in places 6 to 8 feet wide. There was no choice but to barge right through them. Their gritty shells must have

provided good traction as we "no got stuck" once. It would have been quite easy to have filled the truck with live snails.

Now the great extravaganza of that season has passed — gone the Herons, Bitterns and Mosquitoes, and only can I submit to you "snaps of Snails".

Carp (Cyprinus, Carpio) Established in Province

A. H. MacDonald, Dir. of Fisheries,
Dept. of Natural Resources, P.A.

The first definite proof that Carp (Cyprinus Carpio) had become established in Saskatchewan was produced this fall with the discovery of numerous six-inch Carp in ditches and sloughs adjacent to the Assiniboine River near Kamsack. During the spring the banks of the river at this point were flooded and adult Carp spawned in the ditches and fields.

Although considered an important food fish in many parts of Europe and Asia, Carp are generally considered an undesirable species all over America. Their high productivity and ability to withstand environmental limitations have enabled the species to become established in most parts of the continent, often at the expense of desirable native species.

The carp is omnivorous in its feeding habits, but the principal food is insect larvae, crustaceans and other bottom organisms. Its habit of rooting amongst aquatic plants keeps the water constantly muddy and, aside from destroying aquatic plants, the muddy water is detrimental to other species. It can survive for days in a closed container and may be transported great distances and used as bait. It is illegal to carry live bait from one lake to another in Saskatchewan, and anglers are warned of the danger of extending the range of this undesirable species.

Carp were introduced into the United States from Germany in 1872 by J. A. Poppe and planted in California, and today it is established in practically every State. They were unknown in Manitoba until 1938, and are now plentiful in the Red and Winnipeg Rivers, and more recently in the Assiniboine.

ARTIFACTS

ALLAN J. HUDSON, Mortlach, Sask.

To those collectors of stone age tools who have graduated past the stage where only arrowpoints and stone hammers can be recognized, and have arrived at the point where they compare their finds with Old World material, intriguing mysteries seem to present themselves. But those who have read the "Golden Bough" will know how easy is the path to myth and magic, starting from the same point that science begins.

The temptation to leap to the belief that human occupation here follows a pattern similar to the Old World must be held in check. Consider well the difficulties. Certainly within the last 25000 years, probably less, Saskatchewan was under the ice cap. Those granites, limestones, basalts and quartzites were moved in from the north-east by the ice, and local material went along with the other material. Between the grinding action of the ice and rock material, and the action of the water released by the ice, not much of human handiwork, even had it been there, would now be recognizable as such. Wherever glacial meltwater lost speed, deposits were formed and over very large areas the tell was buried by such deposits. Human made material found on such deposits must then be postglacial in origin. I have seen and handled thousands of crude stone tools and I have never yet seen scratches on a flake scar surface. I have, indeed, some stone tools made of basalt on which the maker left some old surface, showing glacial scatches. The rule could be laid down that an artifact is not a paleolithic situation, and there are only two small unglaciated areas in Saskatchewan where that would be possible — the Rockglen triangle and the south-west portion of the Cypress hills.

In biology the development of an individual organism from a single cell has a well established relationship with the evolution of the

species. Something like this is true of the stone working process. Historically from its earliest beginnings the art shows an evolution of methods which perhaps can be described sometime in more detail.

In the making of any tool, modern Neolithic man has to start from exactly the same point as his Paleolithic ancestor, i.e., the initial breaking down of the rock material by percussion. Undoubtedly with the more advanced tools, he would cut short in his methods. As there must have been in this area a perennial shortage of first-class materials like chalcedony and flint, these would be used for the smaller and better class tools. But with the second grade materials, like quartzite and basalt which he used so extensively for the larger tools, he followed paleolithic methods. As his life in Saskatchewan was basically the same as that of his paleolithic ancestors, that is, almost purely a hunting economy, those rougher tools were just as useful to him as to earlier man.

Even of the more specialized tools it is very risky to infer too much. "We are the heirs of all the ages", which includes the methods of working stone.

The chisel-edged buoin is such a specialized tool and they are found here. One, I have, came from the Mortlach midden and thus is comparatively modern.

In dressing a water-worn quartzite cobblestone, the first flake struck off is a circular or oval flake, one side with a flat flake scar; the other side the convex old surface. Perhaps the major proportion of these were discarded, but a fair number show use and work. Some have been used as cutting or chopping tools without any retouching; some are re-chipped as side scrapers; others are further processed all round and could have been used as choppers, scrapers or hide-dressing tools. Some are used for packing purposes. When you see these flakes in a territory, you know what's been going on there and what to look for.

12th Annual Saskatchewan

Outstanding this year was the excellent coverage of the Saltcoats area arranged by Frank Baines, who organized 20 observers (including C. Stuart Francis who was visiting from Torch River), in seven parties, each of which covered the passable roads in two different school districts.

A total of 27 localities reported, 85 observers participating. Forty species were seen during the main count and another eight species reported for the remainder of the period, December 20—January 3.

Species most commonly seen, in order of frequency, were Magpie, English Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll, Downy Woodpecker, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Pine Grosbeak, and Ruffed Grouse. Sharp-tailed Grouse, Ruffed Grouse and Hungarian Partridge

BLADWORTH, Dec. 26, 10 mi. car, 6 mi. foot. 7 SPECIES. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 13; Horned Owl, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie 5; English Sparrow, 25; Common Redpoll, 150; Snow Bunting, 500. (6 additional: Amer. Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Hungarian Partridge, Snowy Owl, Horned Lark, Bohemian Waxwing.) **P. Lawrence Beckie.**

BREDIN SIDING, Jan. 2, 4 mi. foot. 8 SPECIES. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 8; Horned Owl, 1; Snowy Owl, 1; Magpie, 4; Robin, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 50; English Sparrow, 50; Common Redpoll, 6. (4 additional: Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Strike.) — **Doug Gilroy.**

BROADVIEW, Jan. 1, 40 mi. car. 7 SPECIES. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 9; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; English Sparrow, 100; Common Redpoll, 50; Snow Bunting, 400. (Additional: Am. Rough-legged Hawk, Hungarian Partridge.) — **Audrey and Charles Thacker.**

DILKE, Jan. 3, 3 mi. car, chores. 6 SPECIES. Golden Eagle, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 12; Hungarian Partridge, 11; Horned Lark, 4; Magpie, 2; English Sparrow, 25. (6 additional: Marsh Hawk on Dec. 25; Short-eared Owl on Dec. 27; Northern Shrike, Starling, Redpoll, Snow Bunting.) — **J. B., Margaret and Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Belcher.**

DUVAL, Dec. 26, 12 mi. car, 8 mi. foot. 14 SPECIES. Bald Eagle, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 6; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 31; Hungarian Partridge, 12; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Horned Owl, 1; Snowy Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Canada Jay, 1; Magpie, 9;

Black-capped Chickadee, 14; Bohemian Waxwing, 7; English Sparrow, 48; Snow Bunting, 79. (Additional: 4 Cedar Waxwings on Dec. 21; Downy Woodpecker; Northern Shrike.) — **Geo. H. Herber.**

FORT SAN, Jan. 2, 26 mi. car. 6 SPECIES. Am. Golden-eye, 1; Magpie, 1; Starling, 1; English Sparrow, 10; Common Redpoll, 15; Snow Bunting, 100. (Add: Black-capped Chickadee, Robin on Dec. 30, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak.) — **E. M. Calin.**

GRENFELL, Dec. 27, 3 mi. foot. 3 SPECIES. Magpie, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; English Sparrow, 20. (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, Hungarian Partridge, Pine Grosbeak, Snow Bunting.) **Mr. and Mrs. John Hubbard.**

HAWARDEN, Dec. 31, 20 mi. car, 3 mi. foot. 6 SPECIES. Snowy Owl, 1; Short-eared Owl, 3; Magpie, 1; Starling, 4; English Sparrow, 200; Snow Bunting, 95. (Add: Am. Rough-legged Hawk; Sharp-tailed Grouse, Hungarian Partridge, Bohemian Waxwing, Redpoll.) — **Harold and Gerhard Kvinge.**

McLEAN, Jan. 1, 20 mi. car, 2 mi. foot. 4 SPECIES. Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 10; Snow Bunting, 50. (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, Evening Grosbeak.) — **Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bray.**

MELFORT, Dec. 26, 3 mi. foot. 4 SPECIES. Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; English Sparrow, 4. — **J. M. Gale and party.**

NAICAM, Jan. 3, 6 mi. foot. 9 SPECIES. Ruffed Grouse, 3; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 4; Black-capped Chick-

Christmas Bird Count 1953

were all reported from fewer localities than last year, as was the Hairy Woodpecker.

Two new species were reported this year—a Mourning Dove at Saltcoats and a wounded American Bittern at Yorkton. An unusual number of other species apparently lost their migration urge during the mild fall weather. Golden-eye Ducks remained at Sutherland and Fort San; Short-eared Owls at Dilke, Hawarden, Saltcoats and Yorkton; a Marsh Hawk at Dilke; a Pigeon Hawk at Prince Albert; Crow and Brewer's Blackbirds at Saltcoats; Song Sparrow at Somme; Cedar Waxwings at Duval, Robins at Bredin, Fort San and Yorkton; and Juncos at Prince Albert and Yorkton.

In the following report is given the result of the day's count; then in brackets the other species seen during the period, Dec. 20 to January 5.

adee, 8; English Sparrow, 5; Pine Grosbeak, 5; Common Redpoll, 1; Snow Bunting, 45. (Add: Hairy Woodpecker, Raven.) — **W. Yanchinski.**

NIPAWIN, Jan. 3, 36 mi. car, 4 mi. foot. 15 SPECIES. Hungarian Partridge, 22; Snowy Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 3; Canada Jay, 9; Blue Jay, 7; Magpie, 1; Raven, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 9; Hudsonian Chickadee, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 1; English Sparrow, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 1; Common Redpoll, 67; Snow Bunting, 162; (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, Northern Shrike, Starling, Evening Grosbeak.) — **Walter and Billy Matthews.**

PATHLOW, Jan. 1, 5 mi. foot. 9 SPECIES. Ruffed Grouse, 1; Horned Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 1; Starling, 1; English Sparrow, 60; Pine Grosbeak, 3; Snow Bunting, 1. (5 additional: Sharp-tailed Grouse, Hungarian Partridge, Snowy Owl, Black-capped Chickadee, Redpoll.) — **Rev. T. M. Beveridge.**

PRINCE ALBERT, Dec. 26, 10 mi. car, 2 mi. foot. 9 SPECIES. Blue Jay, 1; Magpie, 1; Raven, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; Hudsonian Chickadee, 2; Bohemian Waxwing, 50; English Sparrow, 12; Common Redpoll, 15; Slate-colored Junco, 1. (Add: Goshawk on Jan. 2, Pigeon Hawk on Dec. 24.) — **E. W. Brooman.**

REGINA, Dec. 25. English Sparrow, 10; Snow Buntings, heard. — **Miss E. Barker.**

RIDGEDALE, Dec. 26, 5 mi. foot. 5 SPECIES. Ruffed Grouse, 5; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 11; Eng-

lish Sparrow, 100. (Add: Hungarian Partridge.) — **Jack Grandy, Dr. J. H. More.**

SALTCOATS, Dec. 26. 20 observers in 7 groups. 191 mi. car, 3 mi. foot. 16 SPECIES. Goshawk, 2; Ruffed Grouse, 5; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 36; Mourning Dove, 1; Horned Owl, 3; Short-eared Owl, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Magpie, 17; Crow, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 36; Northern Shrike, 1; English Sparrow, 624; Brewer's Blackbird, 4; Pine Grosbeak, 21; Common Redpoll, 22; Snow Bunting, 1240. — **Dave, Frank, Stuart and Walter Baines, Stuart J. and C. Stuart Francis, Charles, Ben and Jackie Maddaford, Chrissie, Louise and Jim Rooke, Jimmy Spokes, Perry Strom, Leslie Turberfield, Lawrence and George Wiley, Lois, Velma and Ed Wiley.**

SHEHO, Dec. 26, 5 mi. foot. 10 SPECIES. Ruffed Grouse, 4; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 16; Horned Owl, 5; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Magpie, 6; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Pine Grosbeak, 8; Common Redpoll, 5; Snow Bunting, 100. (Add: Northern Shrike, Evening Grosbeak.) — **Wm. Niven.**

SOMME, Dec. 26, 6 mi. foot, 9 mi. horseback. 15 SPECIES. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 14; Hungarian Partridge, 10; Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Pileated Woodpecker, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Canada Jay, 3; Blue Jay, 5; Magpie, 4; Black-capped Chickadee, 8; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; English Sparrow, 2; Pine Grosbeak, 18; Song Sparrow, 1; Snow Bunting, 1. (10 additional: Spruce Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Horned Owl, Arctic 3-toed Woodpecker, American 3-toed Woodpecker, Raven,

Hudsonian Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Hoary Redpoll, Common Redpoll.) — **Ronald, Donald and Edna Hooper.**

SPIRIT LAKE, Dec. 25, 9 mi. foot. 9 SPECIES. Goshawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 2; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 16; English Sparrow, 30; Common Redpoll, 2; Snow Bunting, 32. (Additional: Golden Eagle on Dec. 31; Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak.) — **William Anaka.**

SPIRIT LAKE, Jan. 2, 2½ mi. foot. 10 SPECIES. Ruffed Grouse, 3; Horned Owl, 1; Hawk Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 27; Pine Grosbeak, 5; Common Redpoll, 11; Snow Bunting, 32. (Additional: Bohemian Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak.) — **Joyce Gunn.**

SUTHERLAND, Dec. 27, 20 mi. car. 7 SPECIES. Am. Golden-eye, 2; Hungarian Partridge, 10; Snowy Owl, 1; Magpie, 19; Bohemian Waxwing, 200; English Sparrow, 60; Common Redpoll, 30. (Additional: Starling, Snow Bunting.) — **Arthur, Colin and Stan Ward.**

SWAN RIVER, MAN., (14 miles from Sask. boundary), Dec. 26, 60 mi. car, 1 mi. foot. 11 SPECIES. Snowy Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 6; Raven, 3; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Brown Creeper, 1; English Sparrow, 200; Pine Grosbeak, 17; Hoary Redpoll, 1; Common Redpoll, 15; Snow Bunting, 6. (Additional: Downy Woodpecker.) — **Diane and Mr. and Mrs. J. H. McDonald; Mr. and Mrs. Glen Riddell.**

TISDALE, Jan. 3, 6 mi. foot. 7 SPECIES. Snowy Owl, 1; Blue Jay, 1; Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, many; English Sparrow, many; Redpoll, 4; Snow Bunting, 8. — **Ray Chartier.** (Downy Woodpecker and 12 Pine Grosbeaks noted by **E. W. Van Blaricom** on Dec. 29.)

WALLWORT, Dec. 30, 6 mi. foot. 7 SPECIES. Snowy Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Canada Jay, 3; Raven, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; English Sparrow, 4; Common Redpoll, 6. (Add: Ruffed Grouse, Magpie.) — **J. Turnquist.**

WAUCHOPE, Dec. 28, 15 mi. car. 7 SPECIES. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 30; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Magpie, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; English

Sparrow, 150; Pine Grosbeak, 9; Snow Bunting, 250. (Add: Horned Owl, Redpolls.) — **Marion and John E. Nixon.**

YORKTON, Dec. 26, 23 observers in 6 parties. 131 mi. car, 12 mi. foot. 20 SPECIES. Am. Bittern, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 3; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 36; Hungarian Partridge, 8; Horned Owl, 1; Snowy Owl, 2; Short-eared Owl, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Blue Jay, 3; Magpie, 23; Black-capped Chickadee, 58; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Starling, 25; English Sparrow, 443; Evening Grosbeak, 7; Pine Grosbeak, 14; Common Redpoll, 125; Slate-colored Junco, 50; Snow Bunting, 596. (Additional: Robin, Dec. 30, and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Dec. 22.) — **Tyrone Balacko, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Bjarnason, Wayne Bjorgan, Brother Clarence, Lionel and Ronald Coleman, Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Houston, Brother Justin, Preston Macdonald, Mrs. W. J. McDonald, Allan Nurse, Jack Park, Phil Pawluck, Greg, Irving and Wayne Pearce, Cliff Shaw, Frank and Gillean Switzer, Brother Vincent, D'Arcy Wershler.**

Bats—A Drastic Measure

Mrs. Ellen Averill

With regard to bats which I have read about in two or three "Blue Jays" we have had a great deal of experience with these, as have some of our neighbors. They have almost driven us out of house and home. Our house, partly built of logs, sided inside and out, and partly of lumber, is over 60 years old. The bats got in before we realized and increased quite rapidly up in the attic. They were quite noisy and squawking and scuttling about when we wanted to sleep.

We decided we had to try to drive them out, or at least lessen their numbers considerably — even if they did destroy myriads of harmful insects. A few pounds of moth balls helped, but were not effective enough. Then two years ago we bored auger holes in the gable ends and put a long pipe to the exhaust of our car, and let them have it! It drove out numbers of them in broad daylight. Many others died in the attic. We had to go up through a trap door and sweep them up.

THE SECRETARY'S CORNER

DR. GEORGE F. LEDINGTON

FINANCIAL REPORT

From the Annual Meeting in October, 1953, to the end of February, more than \$1,100.00 have come in to the society. It has taken considerable thought and work on the part of many faithful members to bring in this much money at one dollar a membership.

The most successful method of gaining new members is the personal approach. If you know someone who would like the Blue Jay be sure to tell him about it and take his dollar and send it in. Stories from the Blue Jay or about the Blue Jay in the daily and weekly newspapers have also brought in a good many new members. Special thanks should go to those members who have been responsible for the School Units of Yorkton, Nipawin and Sturgis placing the Blue Jay in their 206 schools.

We do appreciate the work you have done and are doing for the Society. A word from you will be better than a long letter from me. I have just sent out 760 second notices to 1953 members who have not yet paid for 1954. You can help your Society by asking your friend: "Have you sent in your Blue Jay renewal yet?"

SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

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